

DEATH OF WOLVERINE®

MARVEL

1 of 4

CHARLES SOULE
STEVE MCNIVEN
JAY LEISTEN
JUSTIN PONSOR



THE END

**BRITISH COLUMBIA.
NOW.**

SCENTS ON THE WIND...
GUNSMOKE. BLOOD.

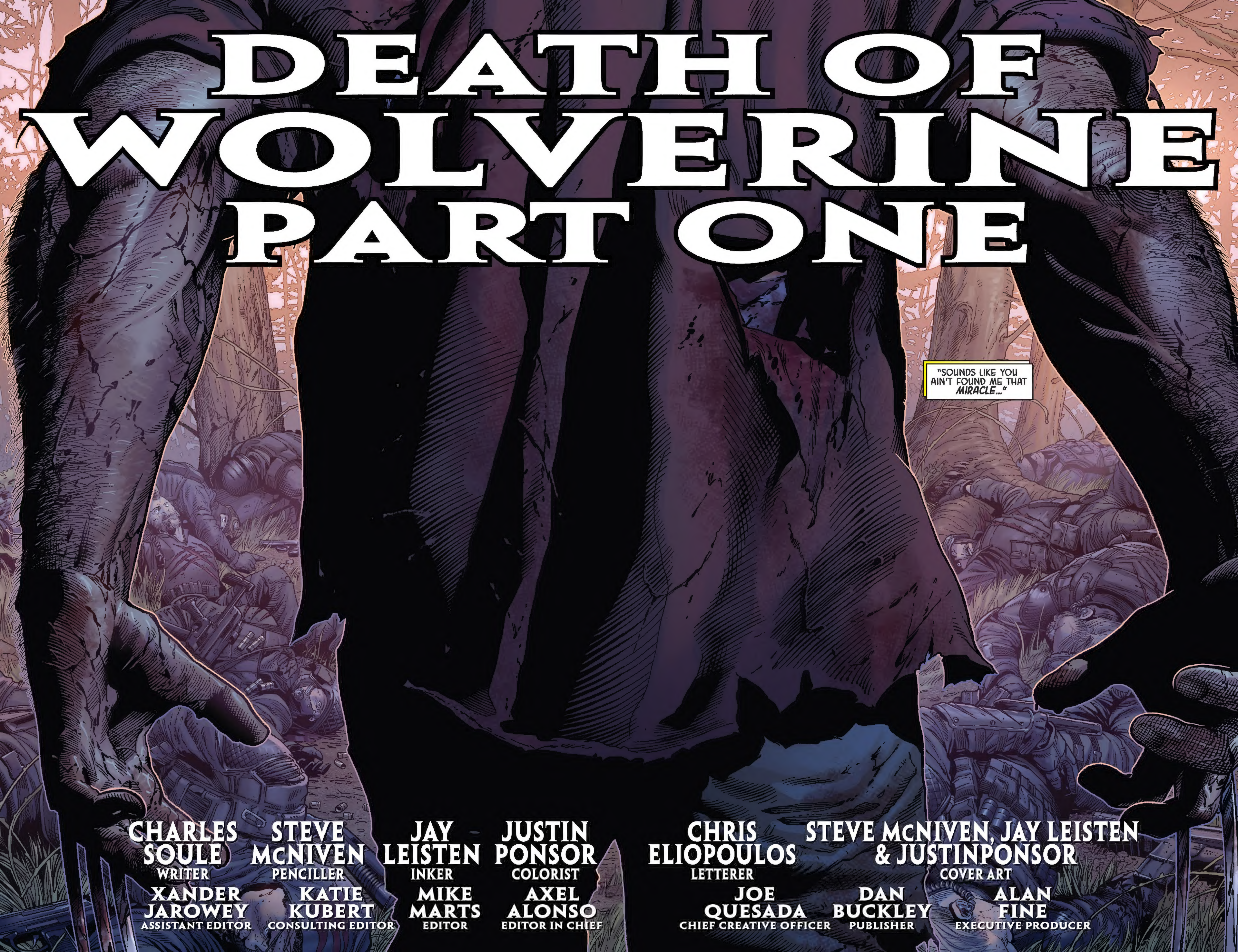
SOUNDS...
NOTHING.

SILENCE.

PAIN...
HANDS.







DEATH OF WOLVERINE PART ONE

"SOUNDS LIKE YOU
AIN'T FOUND ME THAT
MIRACLE..."

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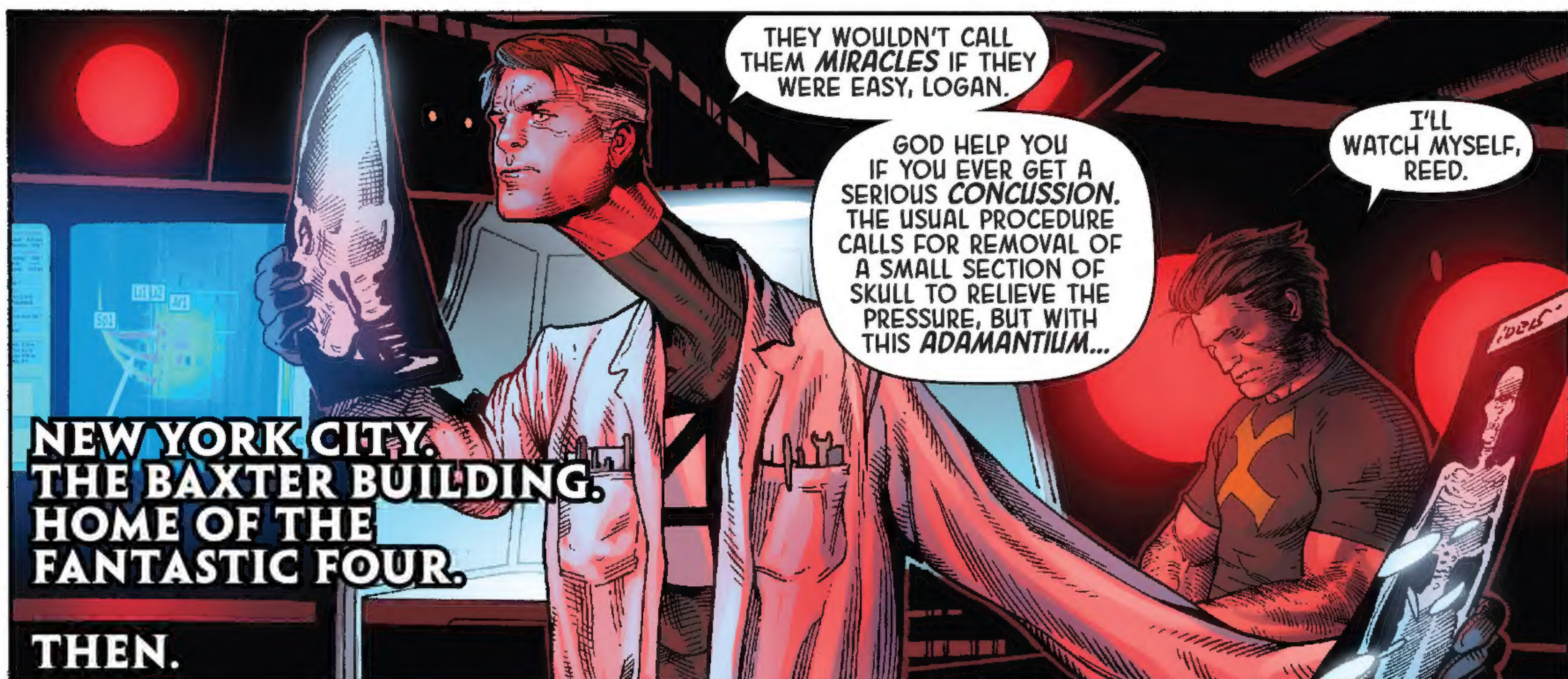
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NEW YORK CITY.
THE BAXTER BUILDING.
HOME OF THE
FANTASTIC FOUR.

THEN.

THEY WOULDN'T CALL
THEM *MIRACLES* IF THEY
WERE EASY, LOGAN.

GOD HELP YOU
IF YOU EVER GET A
SERIOUS *CONCUSSION*.
THE USUAL PROCEDURE
CALLS FOR REMOVAL OF
A SMALL SECTION OF
SKULL TO RELIEVE THE
PRESSURE, BUT WITH
THIS *ADAMANTIUM*...

I'LL
WATCH MYSELF,
REED.



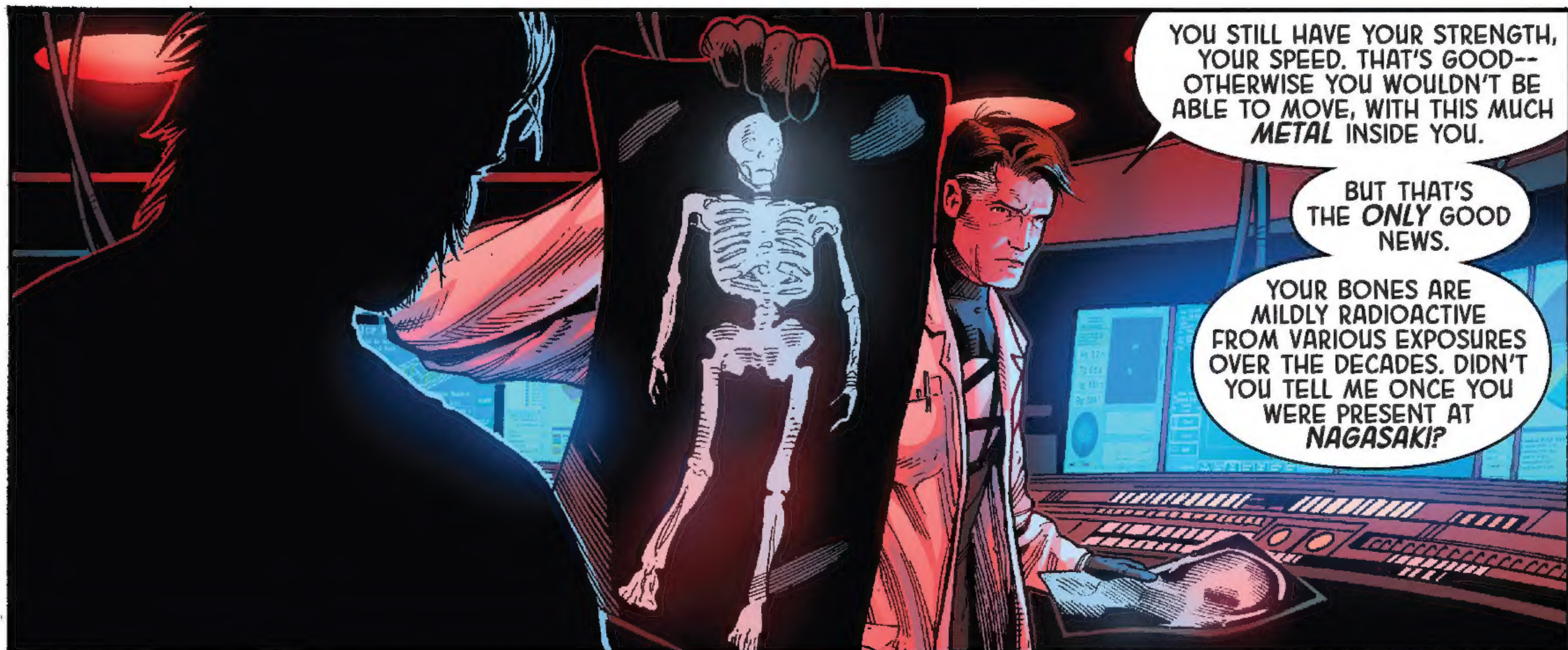
SO LAY
IT OUT FOR
ME.



ALL RIGHT.
LISTEN.

YOU HAVE LOST YOUR
HEALING FACTOR. THE
PROBLEM IS THAT
EVERYTHING YOU DO--
YOUR ENTIRE PHYSICAL
STRUCTURE--IS BUILT
AROUND THE FACT THAT
YOU CAN RAPIDLY HEAL
FROM ALMOST *ANY*
INJURY.

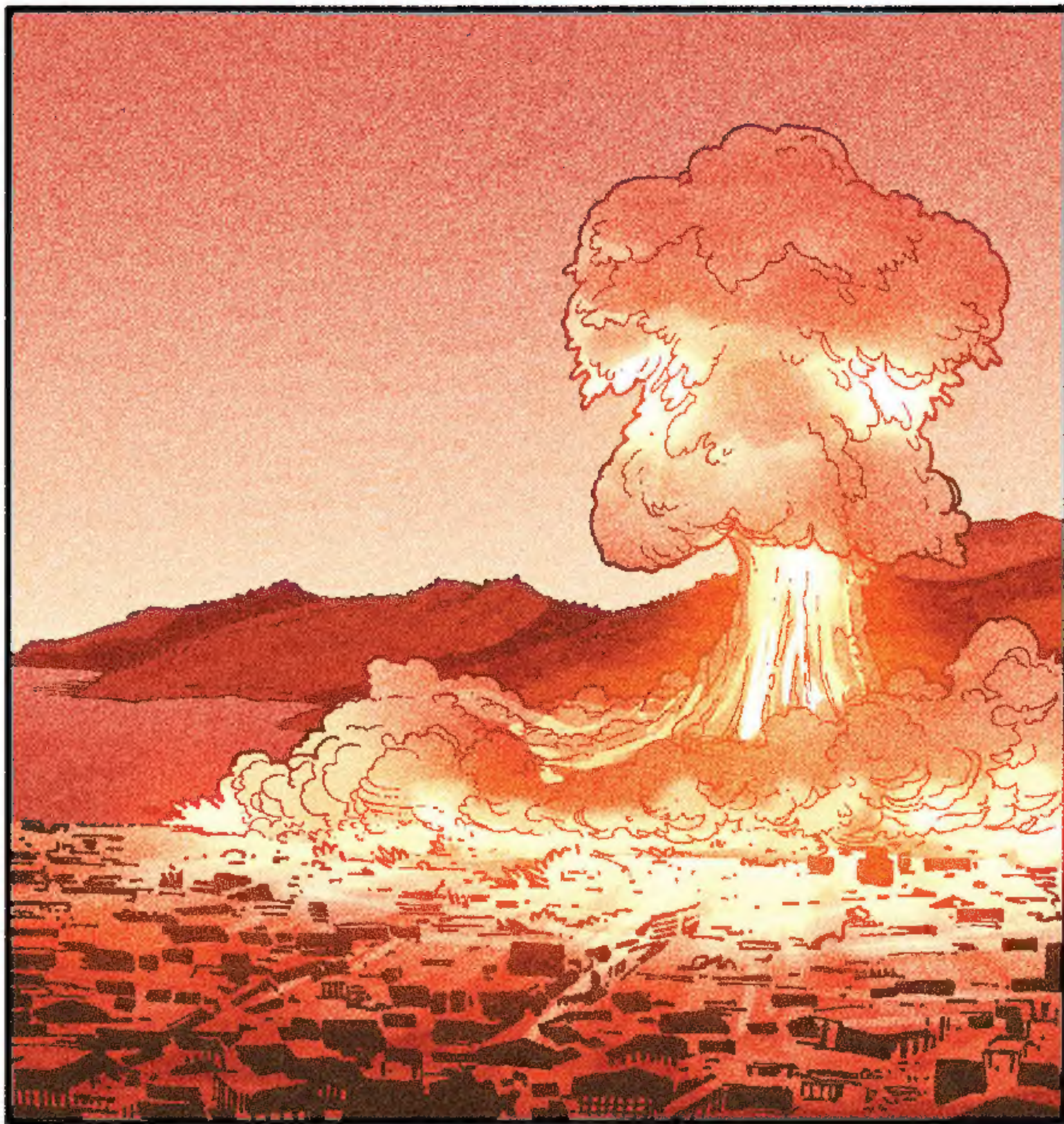
OR...YOU
COULD.



YOU STILL HAVE YOUR STRENGTH,
YOUR SPEED. THAT'S GOOD--
OTHERWISE YOU WOULDN'T BE
ABLE TO MOVE, WITH THIS MUCH
METAL INSIDE YOU.

BUT THAT'S
THE *ONLY* GOOD
NEWS.

YOUR BONES ARE
MILDLY RADIOACTIVE
FROM VARIOUS EXPOSURES
OVER THE DECADES. DIDN'T
YOU TELL ME ONCE YOU
WERE PRESENT AT
NAGASAKI?



YEAH.

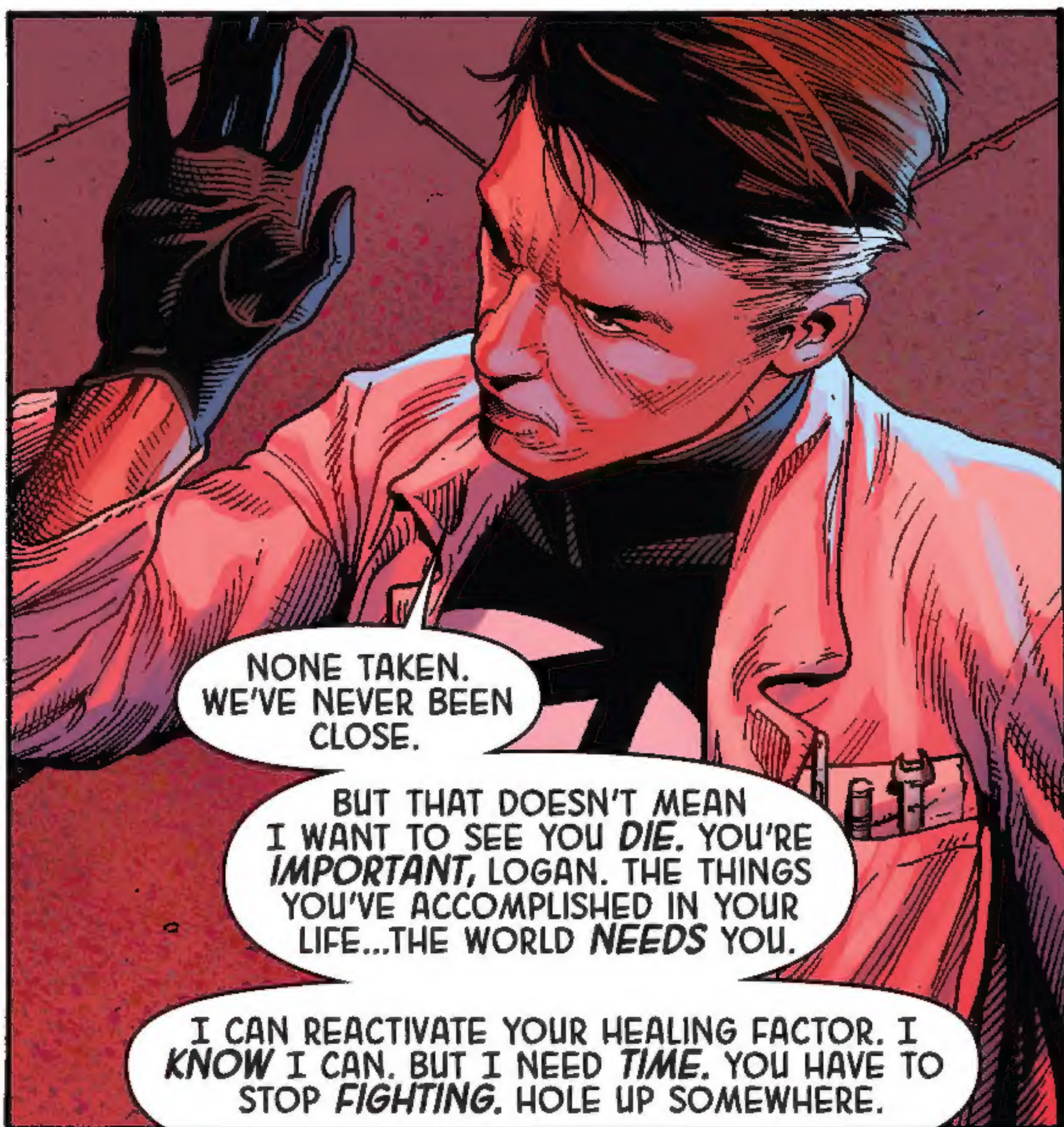


YES, WELL. YOU'RE A PRIME CANDIDATE FOR HEAVY METAL-RELATED **LEUKEMIA**.

IF YOU DON'T GET **ENDOCARDITIS** FROM ALL THE BACTERIA YOU PULL INTO YOURSELF EVERY TIME YOU USE YOUR CLAWS.

I CAN SOLVE THIS FOR YOU. I CAN SPEAK WITH STARK, AND HANK MCCOY... WE CAN--

ALREADY SEEN 'EM. YOU'RE THE LAST GENIUS ON MY LIST, STRETCH. NO OFFENSE.



NONE TAKEN. WE'VE NEVER BEEN CLOSE.

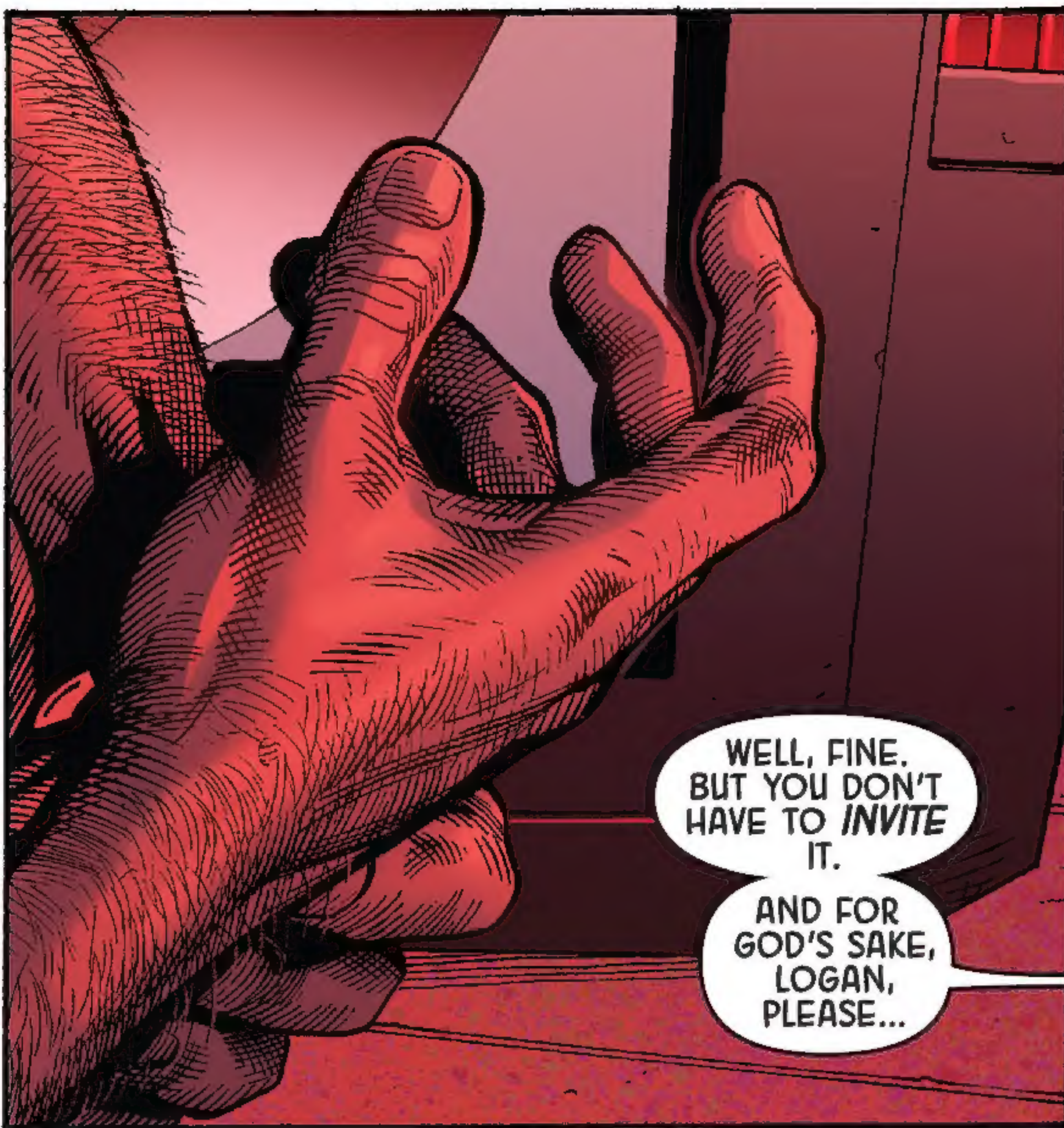
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I WANT TO SEE YOU **DIE**. YOU'RE **IMPORTANT**, LOGAN. THE THINGS YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED IN YOUR LIFE...THE WORLD **NEEDS** YOU.

I CAN REACTIVATE YOUR HEALING FACTOR. I **KNOW** I CAN. BUT I NEED **TIME**. YOU HAVE TO STOP **FIGHTING**. HOLE UP SOMEWHERE.



YEAH, SEE, THAT'S THE PROBLEM. WORD'S GONNA GET OUT. DON'T KNOW **HOW**, DON'T KNOW **WHO**, BUT IT **WILL**.

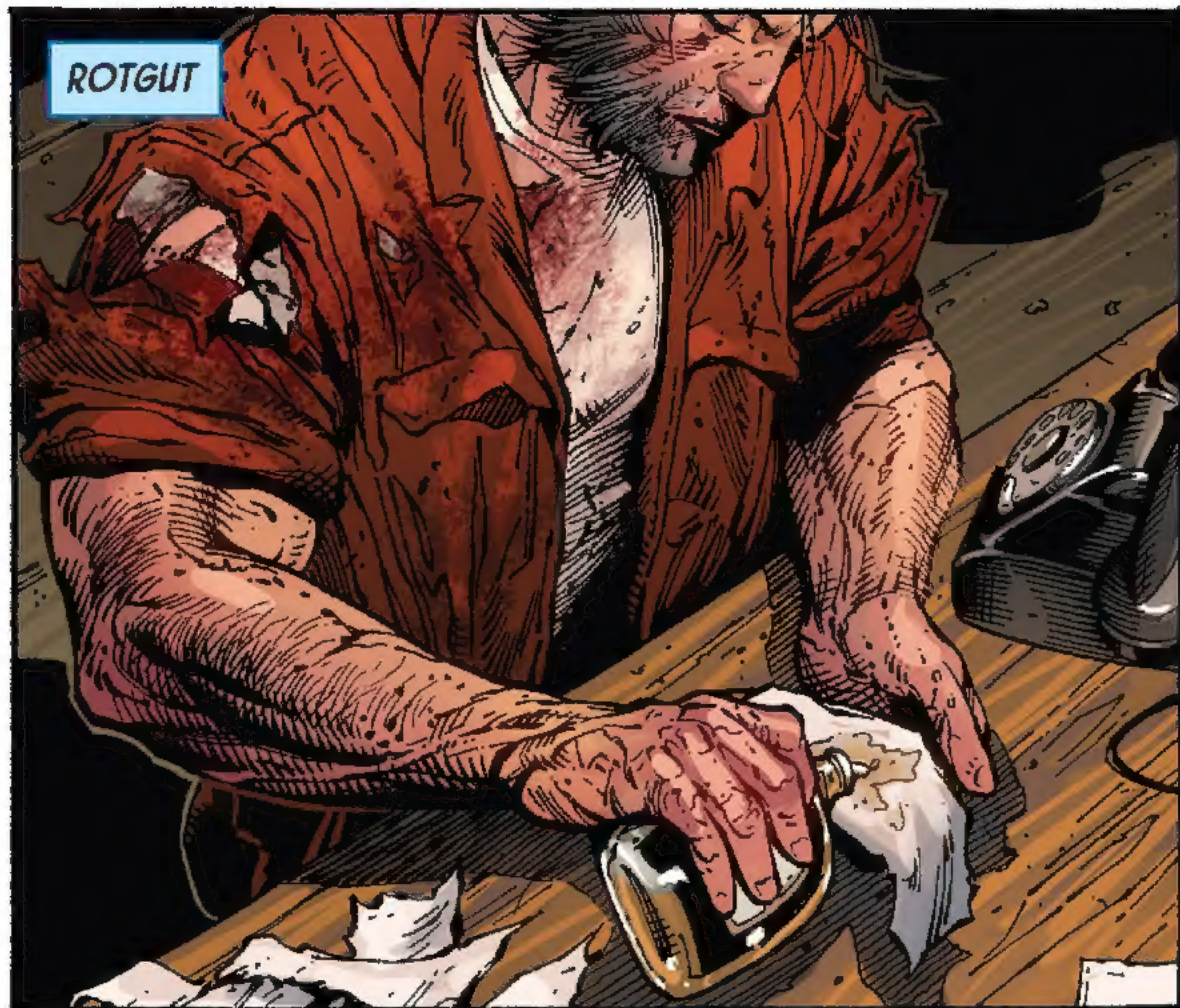
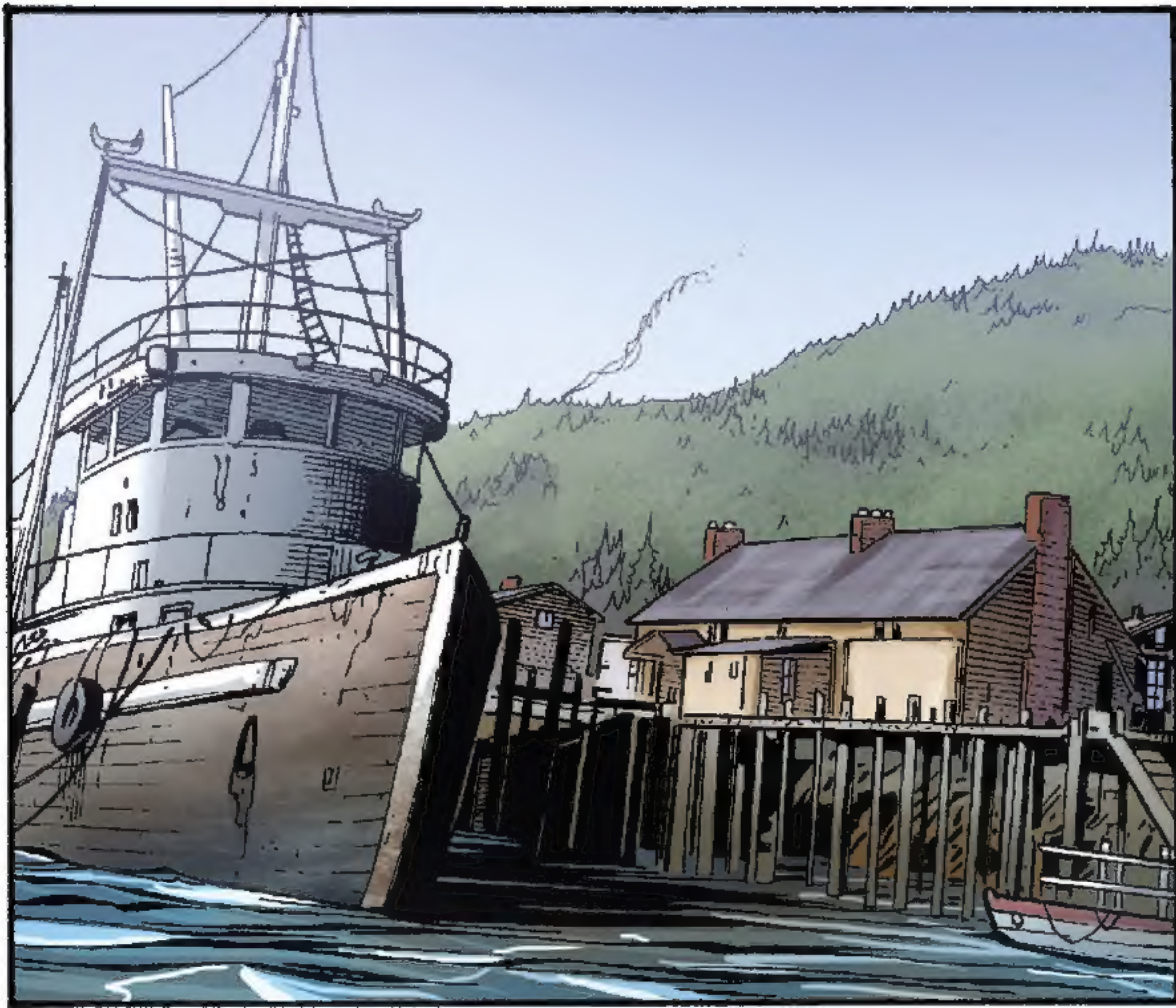
AND THEN THEY'LL COME HUNTING. OPEN SEASON.



WELL, FINE. BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO **INVITE** IT.

AND FOR GOD'S SAKE, LOGAN, PLEASE...







LOGAN! MY GOD. I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT YOU.

YEAH?

YEAH. YOU KNOW BATTLESTAR?

BATTLEST--
CAP'S GUY?

YEAH. HIS SHIELD WAS STOLEN. IT'S MADE OF ADAMANTIUM. MADE ME THINK OF YOU.



I GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT. JUST BECAUSE IT'S ADAMANTIUM--

I KNOW THAT. LOOK, LOGAN, IT'S OKAY FOR PEOPLE TO THINK ABOUT YOU. IT'S OKAY FOR PEOPLE TO CARE ABOUT YOU.

I'M GLAD YOU CALLED. NO ONE'S HEARD FROM YOU IN AGES. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WHERE ARE YOU?

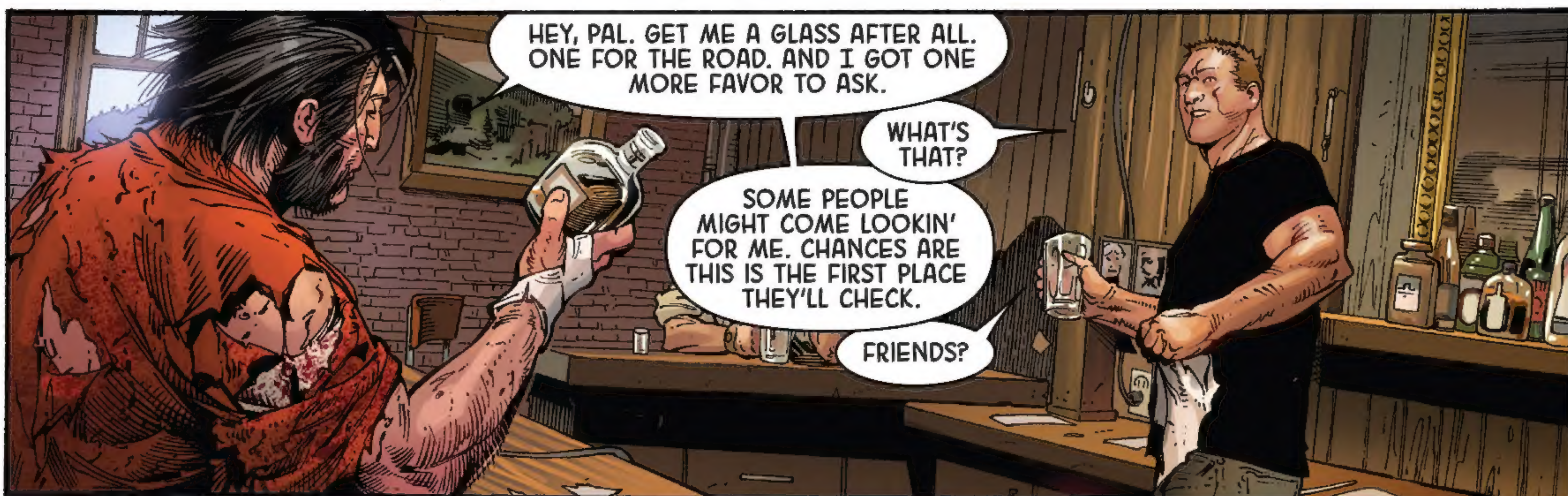
I'M GOOD. JUST NEEDED TO HEAR A FRIENDLY VOICE.

...



WELL, SURE... BUT--

KLIK

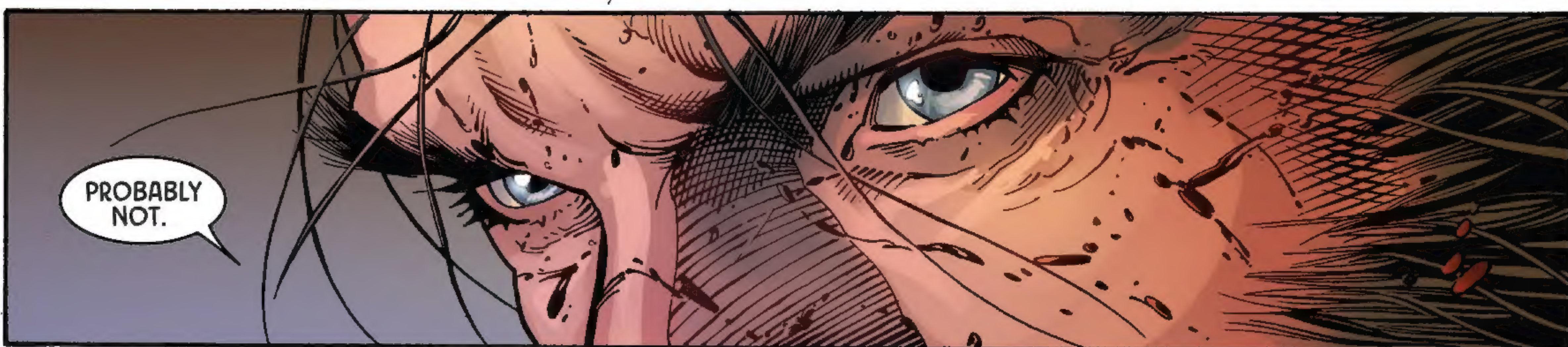


HEY, PAL. GET ME A GLASS AFTER ALL. ONE FOR THE ROAD. AND I GOT ONE MORE FAVOR TO ASK.

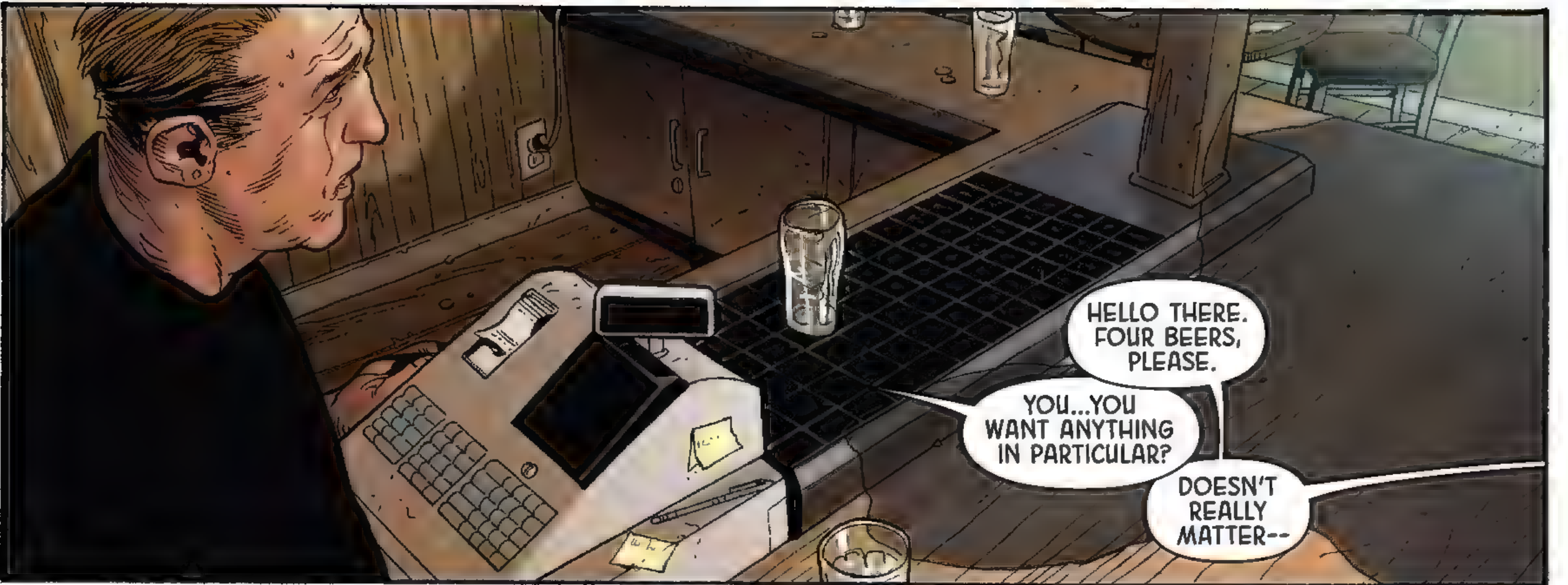
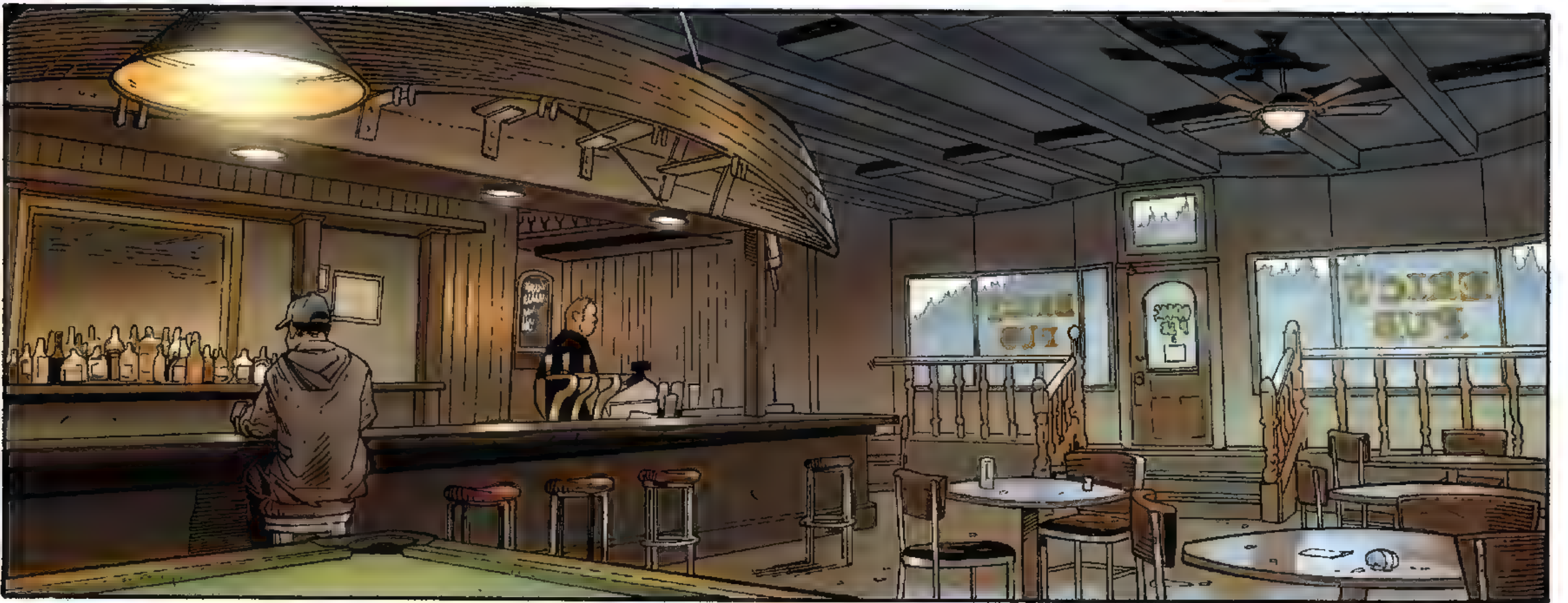
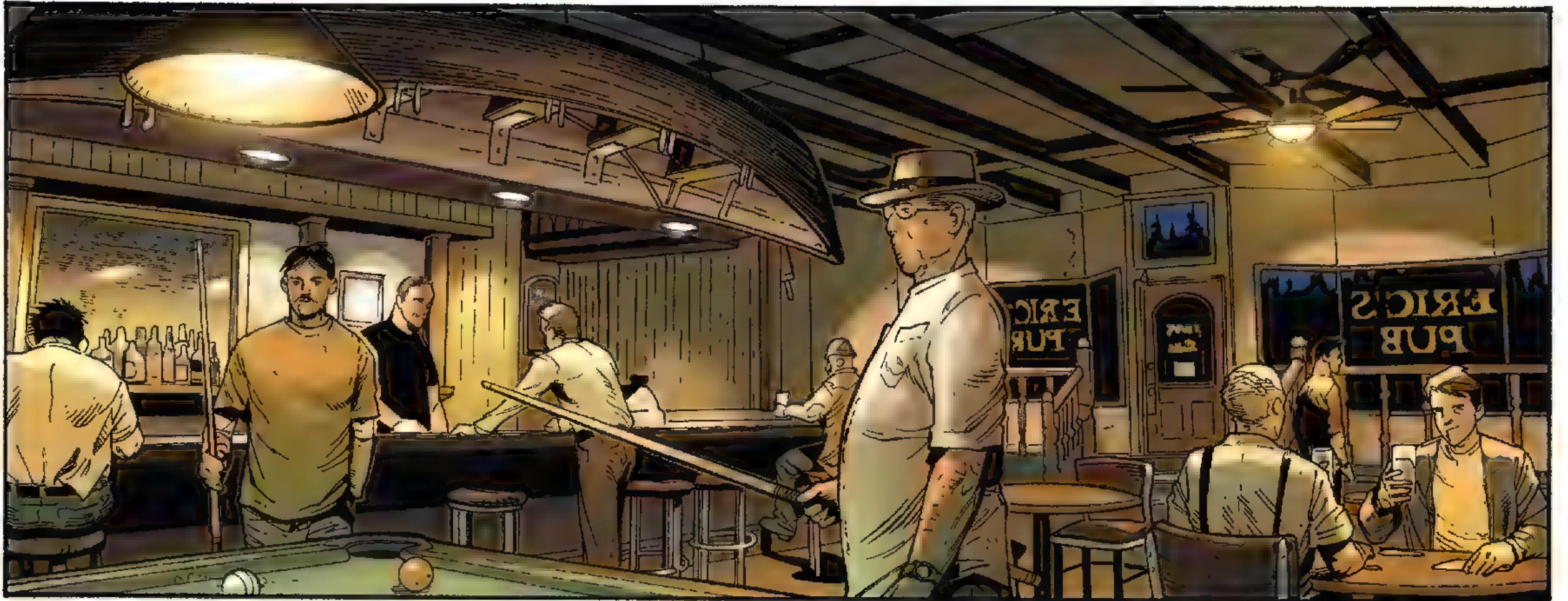
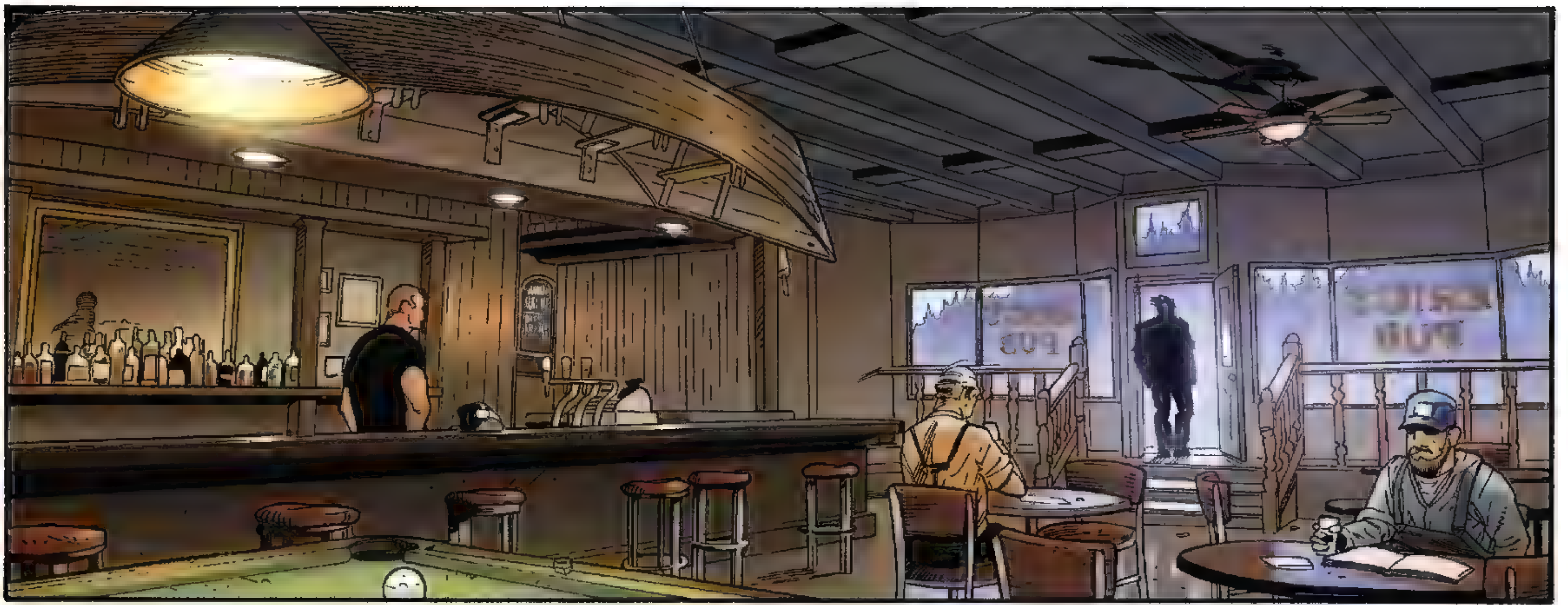
WHAT'S THAT?

SOME PEOPLE MIGHT COME LOOKIN' FOR ME. CHANCES ARE THIS IS THE FIRST PLACE THEY'LL CHECK.

FRIENDS?

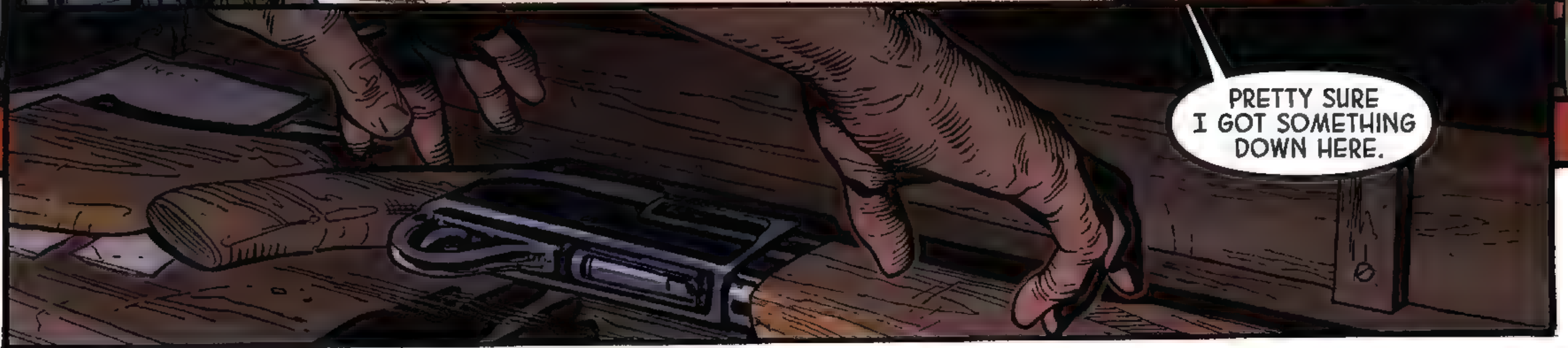


PROBABLY NOT.

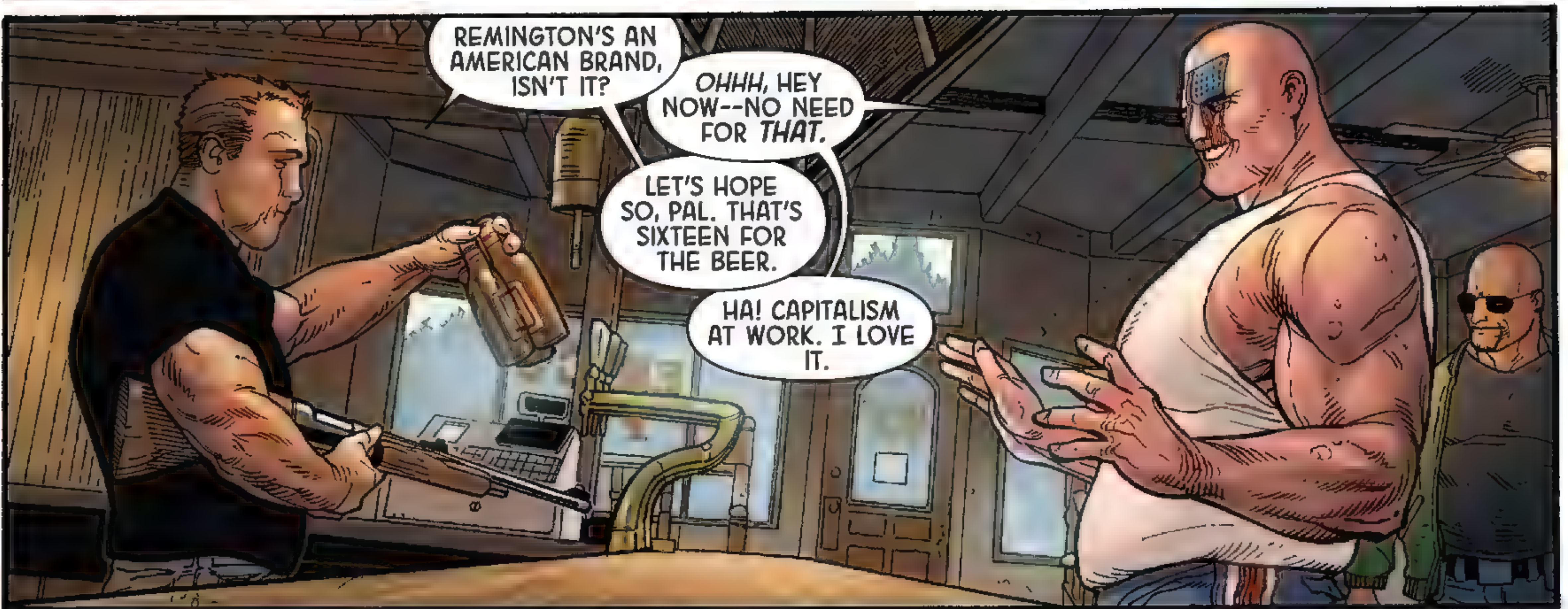




--AS LONG AS IT'S AMERICAN.



PRETTY SURE I GOT SOMETHING DOWN HERE.

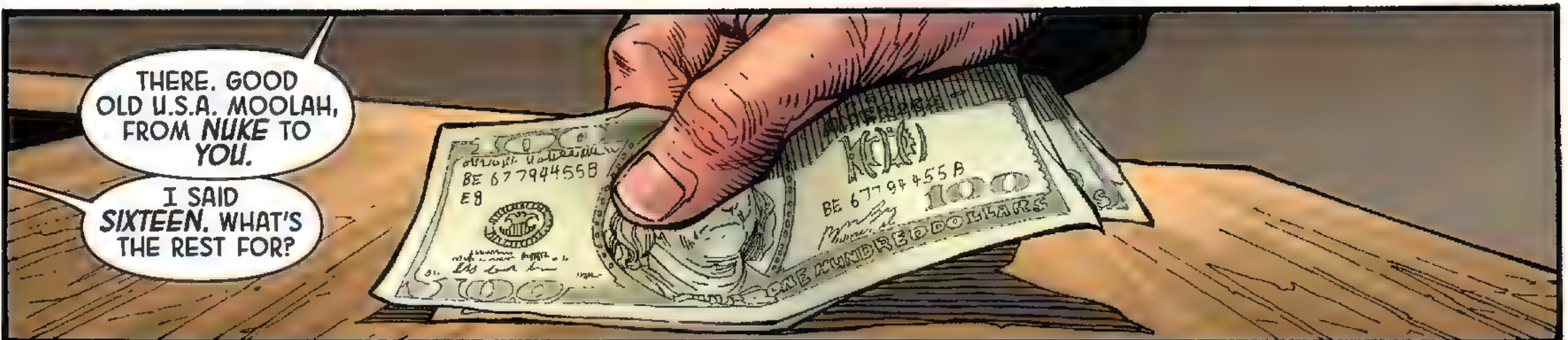


REMINGTON'S AN AMERICAN BRAND, ISN'T IT?

OHhh, HEY NOW--NO NEED FOR THAT.

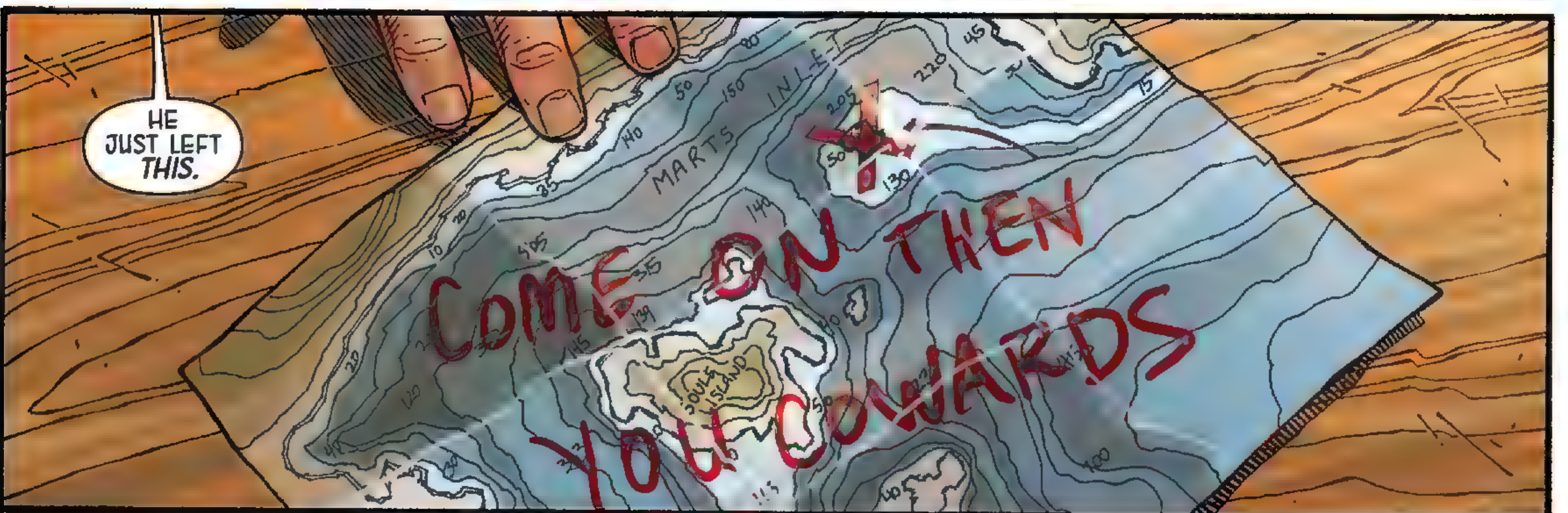
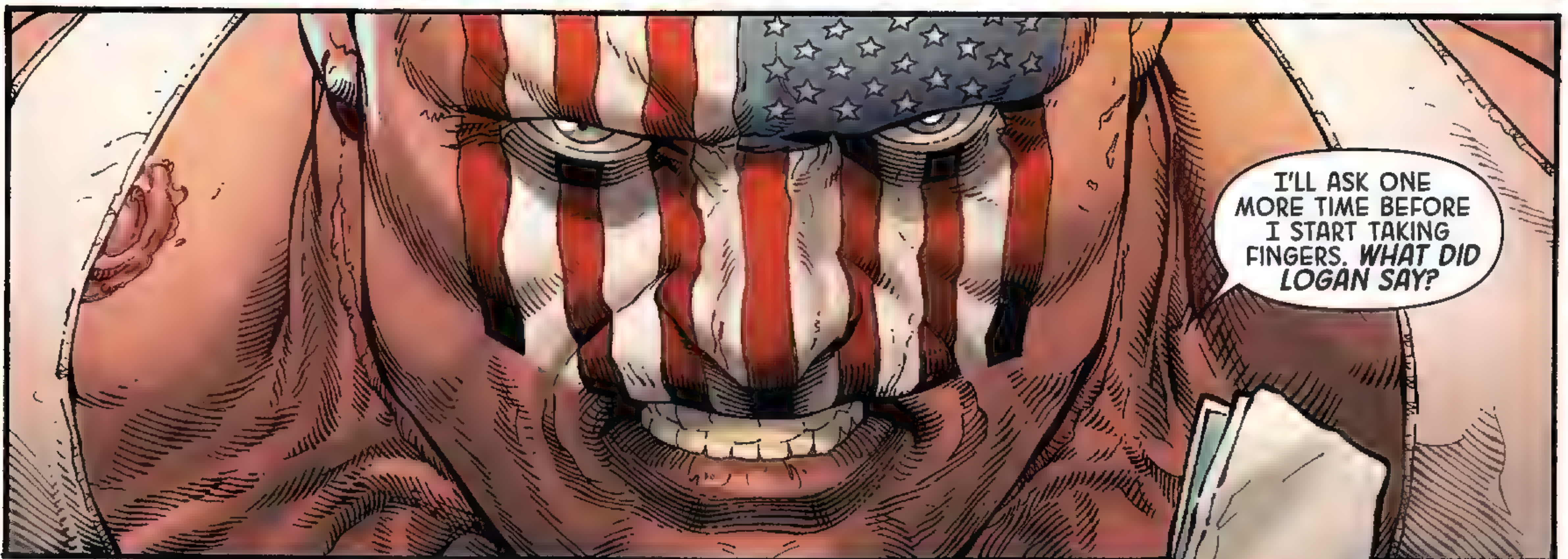
LET'S HOPE SO, PAL. THAT'S SIXTEEN FOR THE BEER.

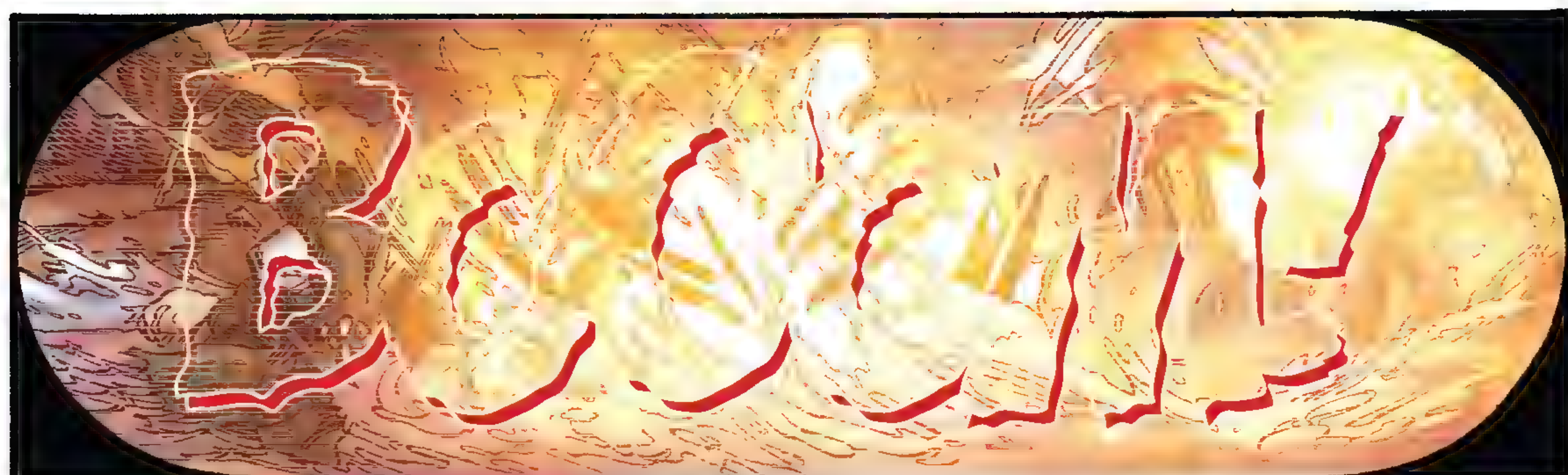
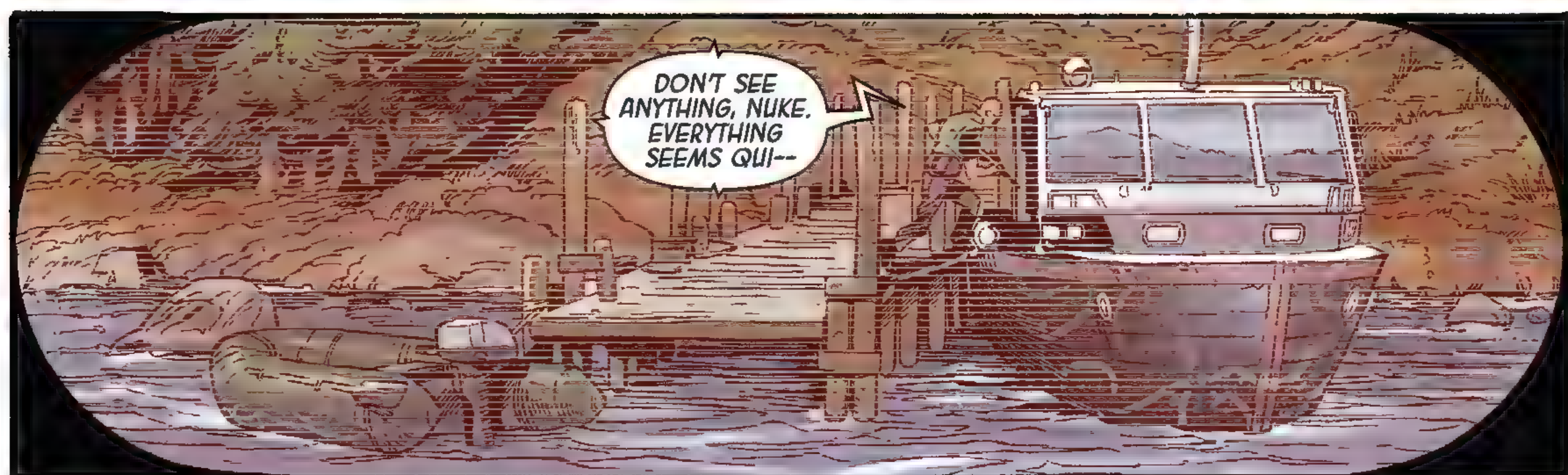
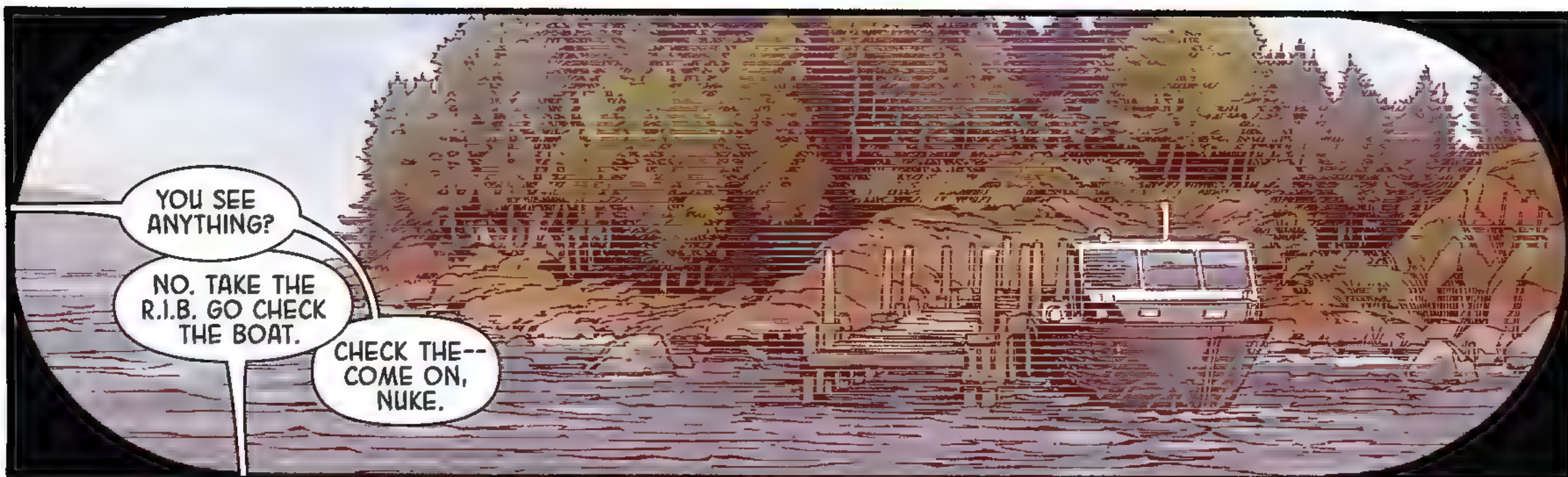
HA! CAPITALISM AT WORK. I LOVE IT.

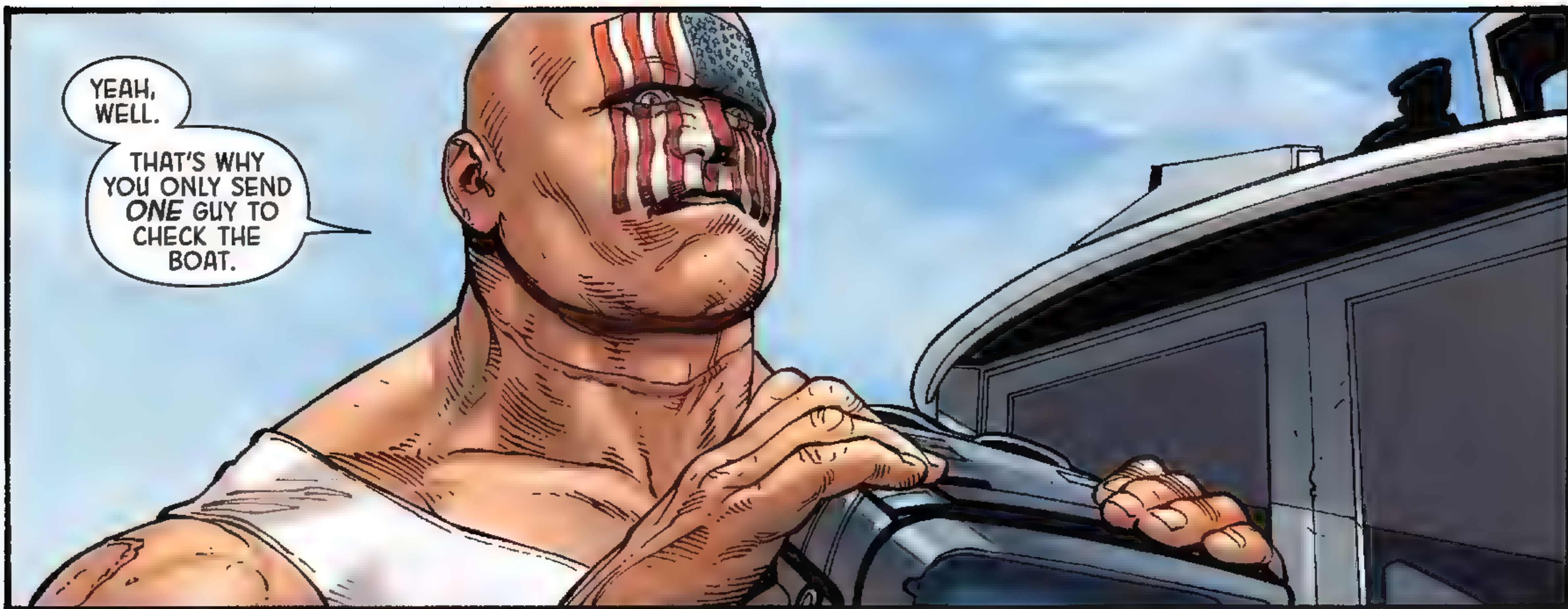


THERE. GOOD OLD U.S.A. MOOLAH, FROM NUKE TO YOU.

I SAID SIXTEEN. WHAT'S THE REST FOR?







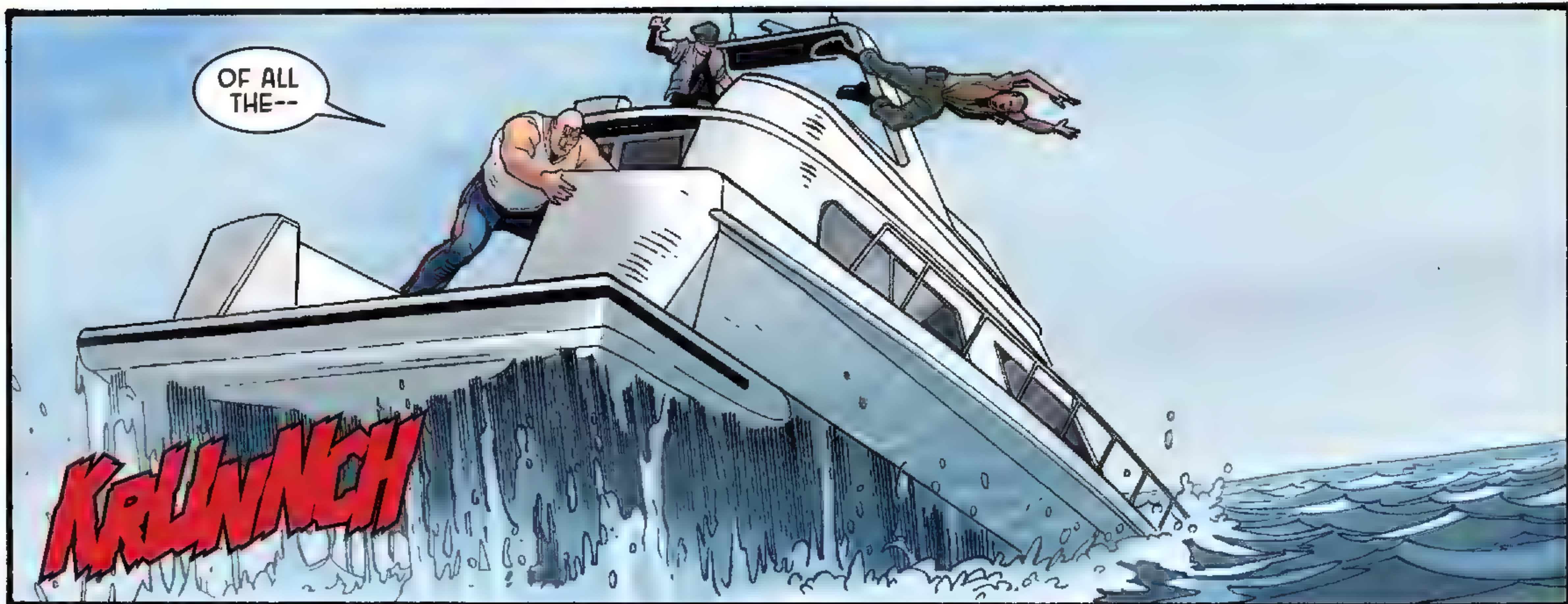
YEAH,
WELL.

THAT'S WHY
YOU ONLY SEND
ONE GUY TO
CHECK THE
BOAT.



HE'S
HERE! HE'S
OUT HERE!

RRRRKKK



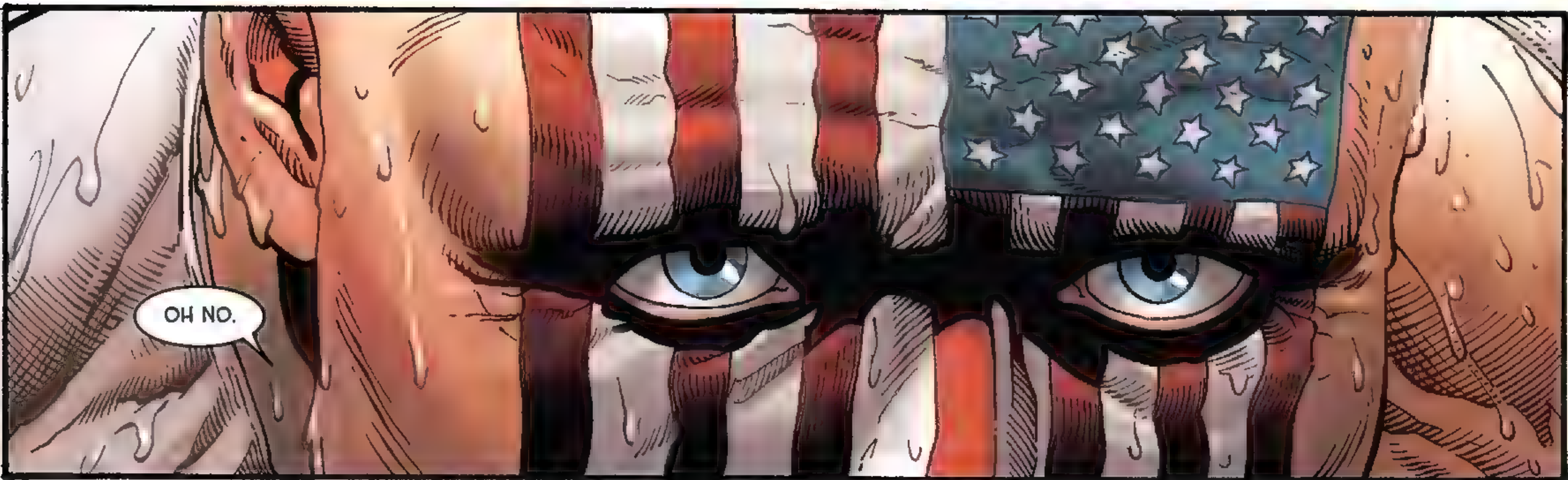
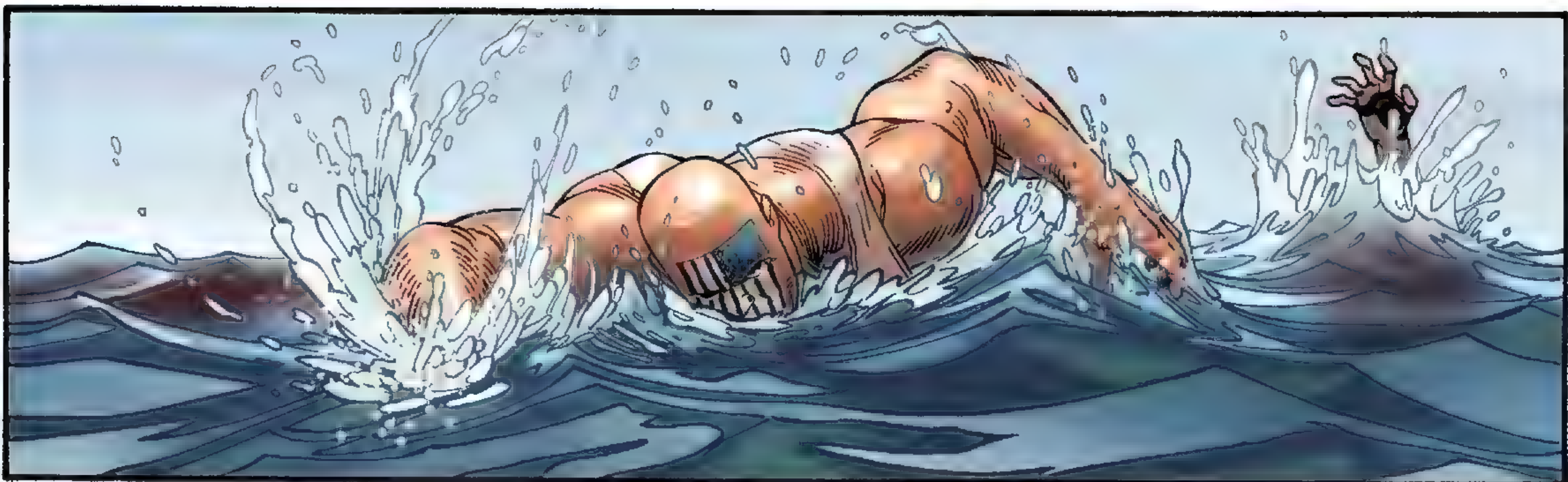
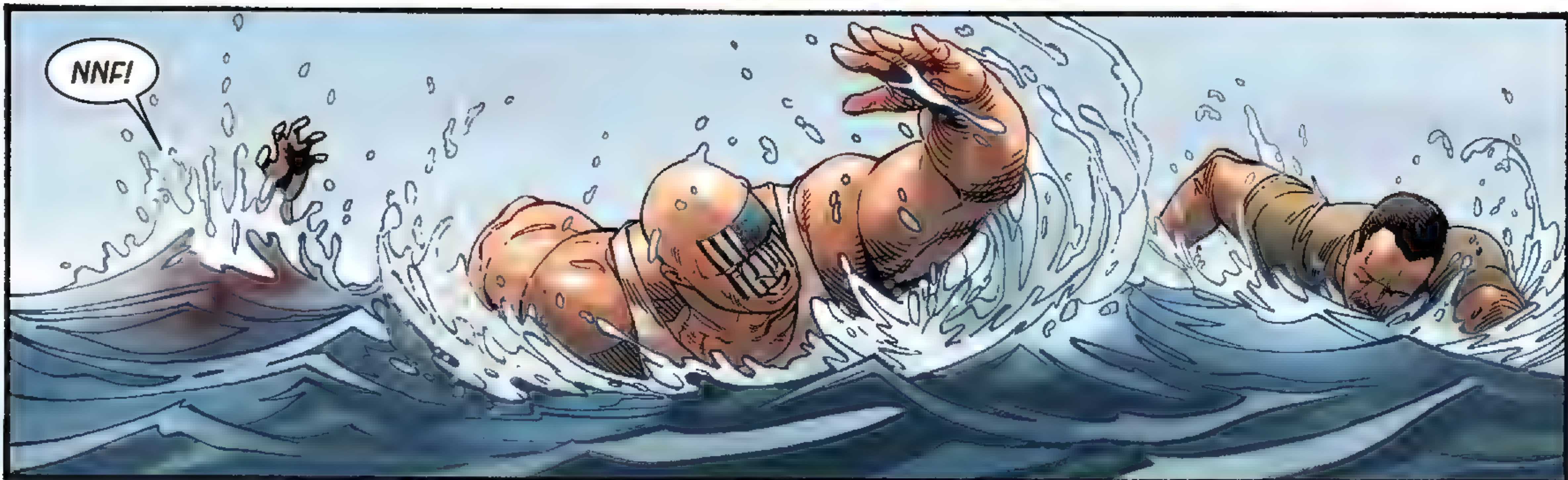
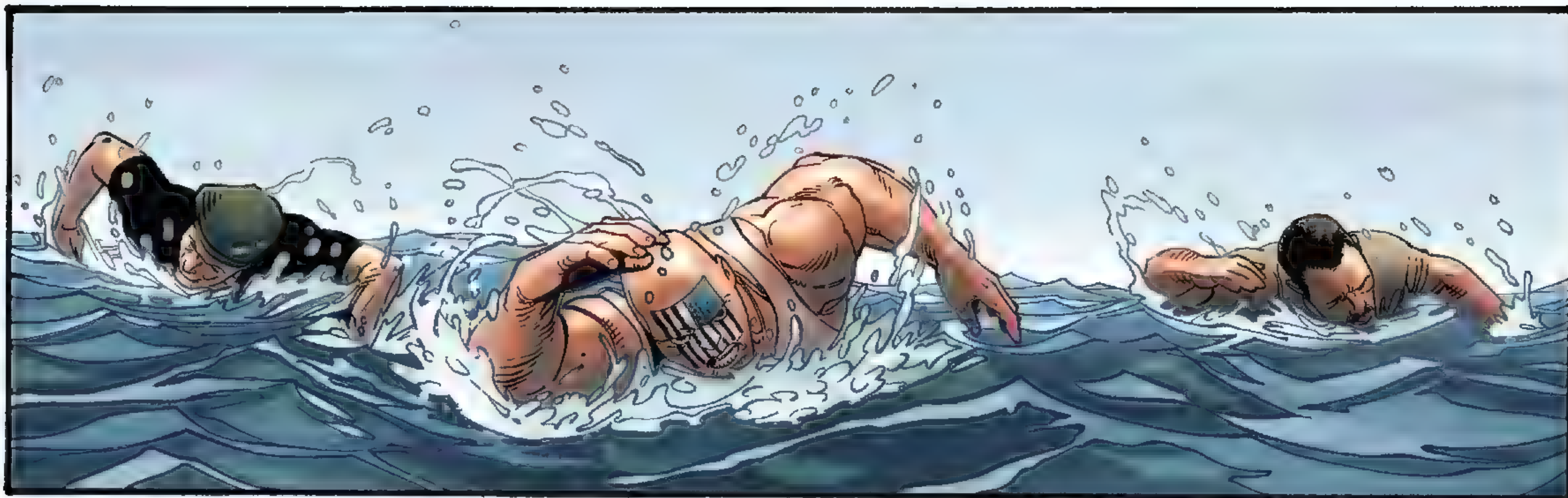
OF ALL
THE--

KRUNNCH



I KNOW
THIS GUY,
BOYS. IT'S
SIMPLE.

GET TO
SHORE OR
DIE.





HALF THOSE GUYS
TOOK **EACH OTHER** OUT
TRYING TO GET AT **ME**. AND
THE REST...DECIDED THEY'D
RATHER **FIGHT** THAN HAVE
A **CONVERSATION**.

BEER. DOME WAX.
FRIED FOOD.

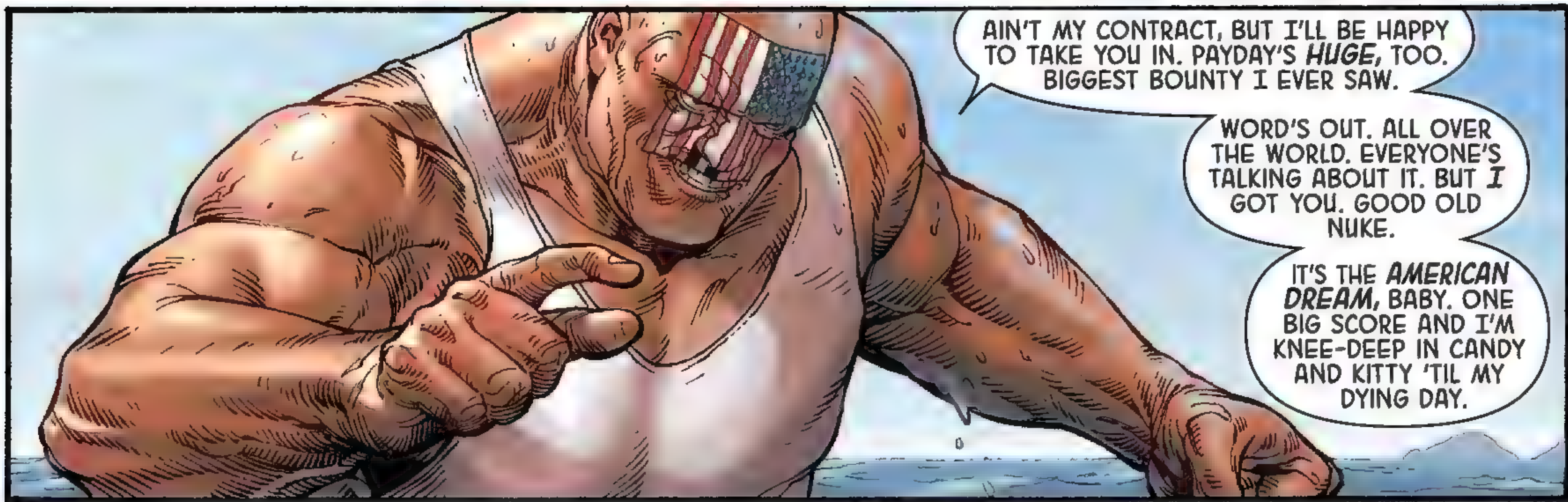
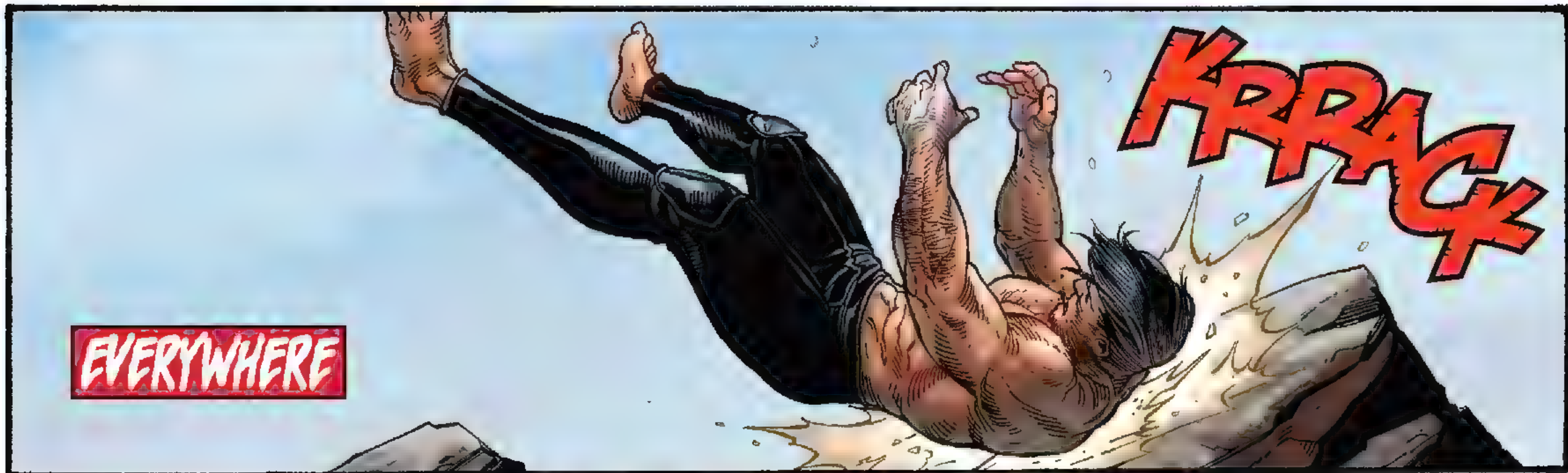
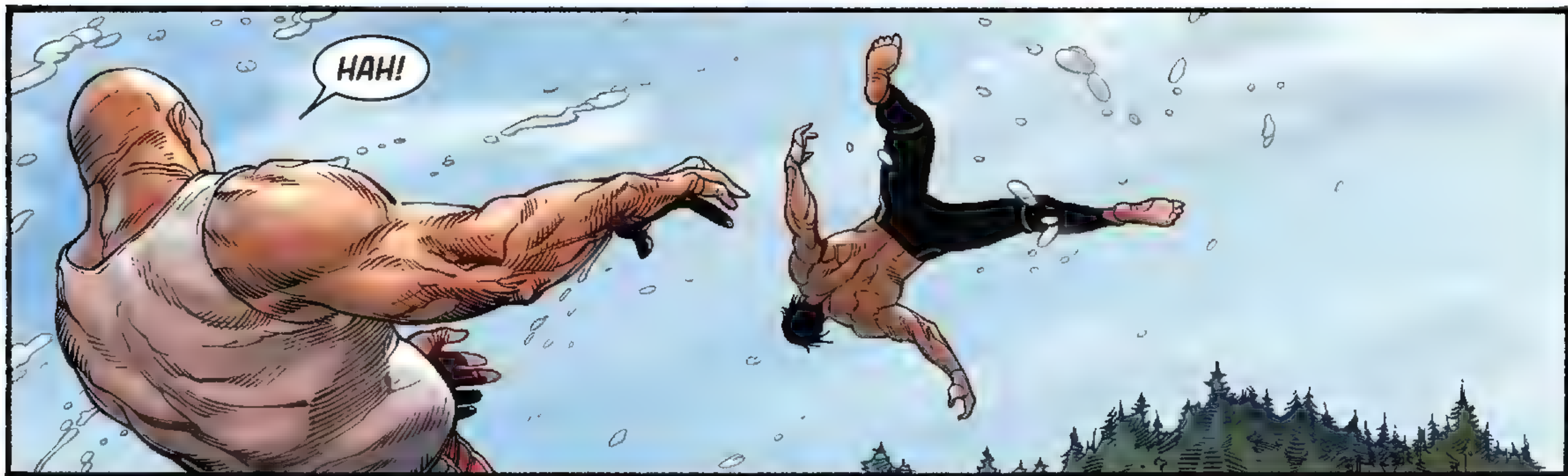
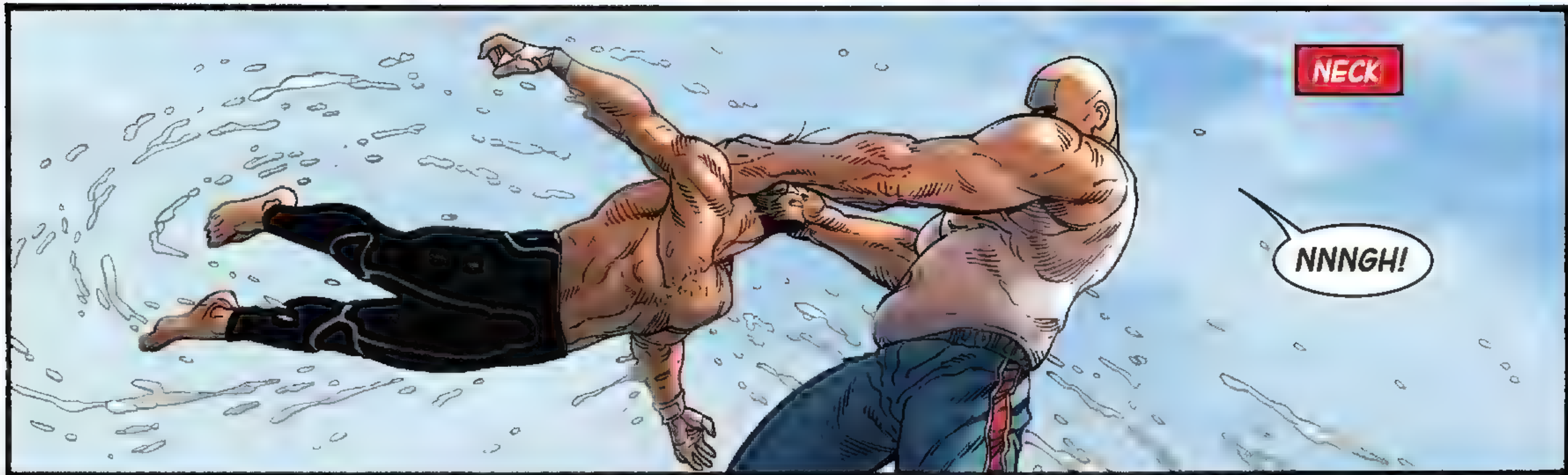
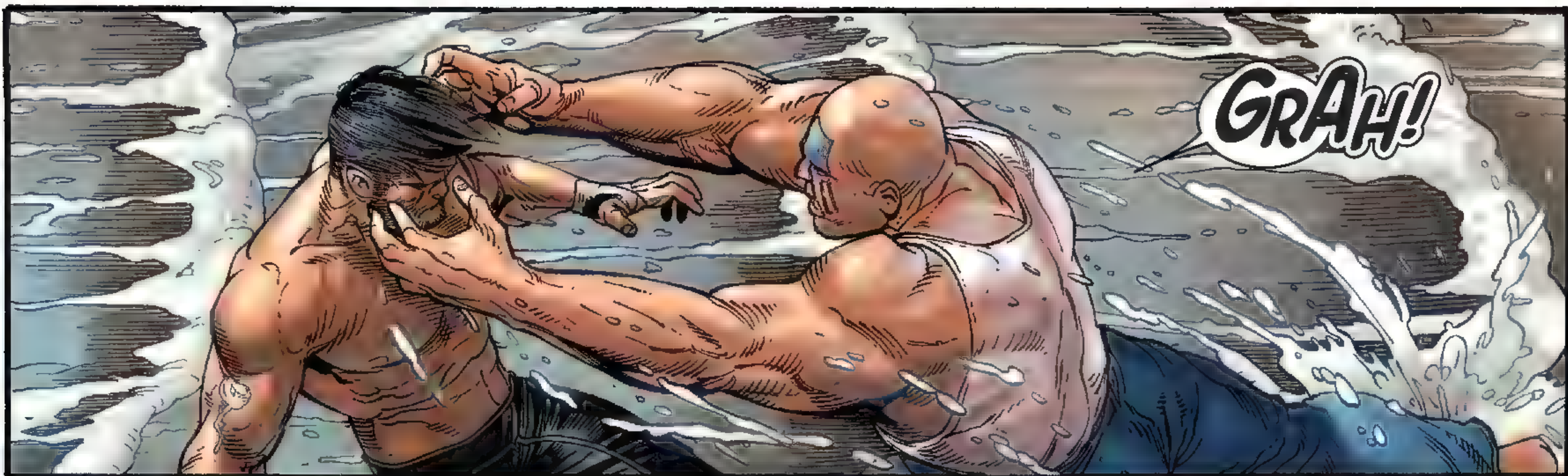
NOT ME,
LOGAN. YOU KNOW
ME. I'M ALWAYS UP
FOR A LITTLE
TÊTE-À-TÊTE.

UH-HUH. THIS
IS YOUR CONTRACT?
YOU PUT OUT THE
KILL ORDER?

NOPE. JUST
TRYING TO EARN
A LIVIN'.

MUSCLES
TENSING

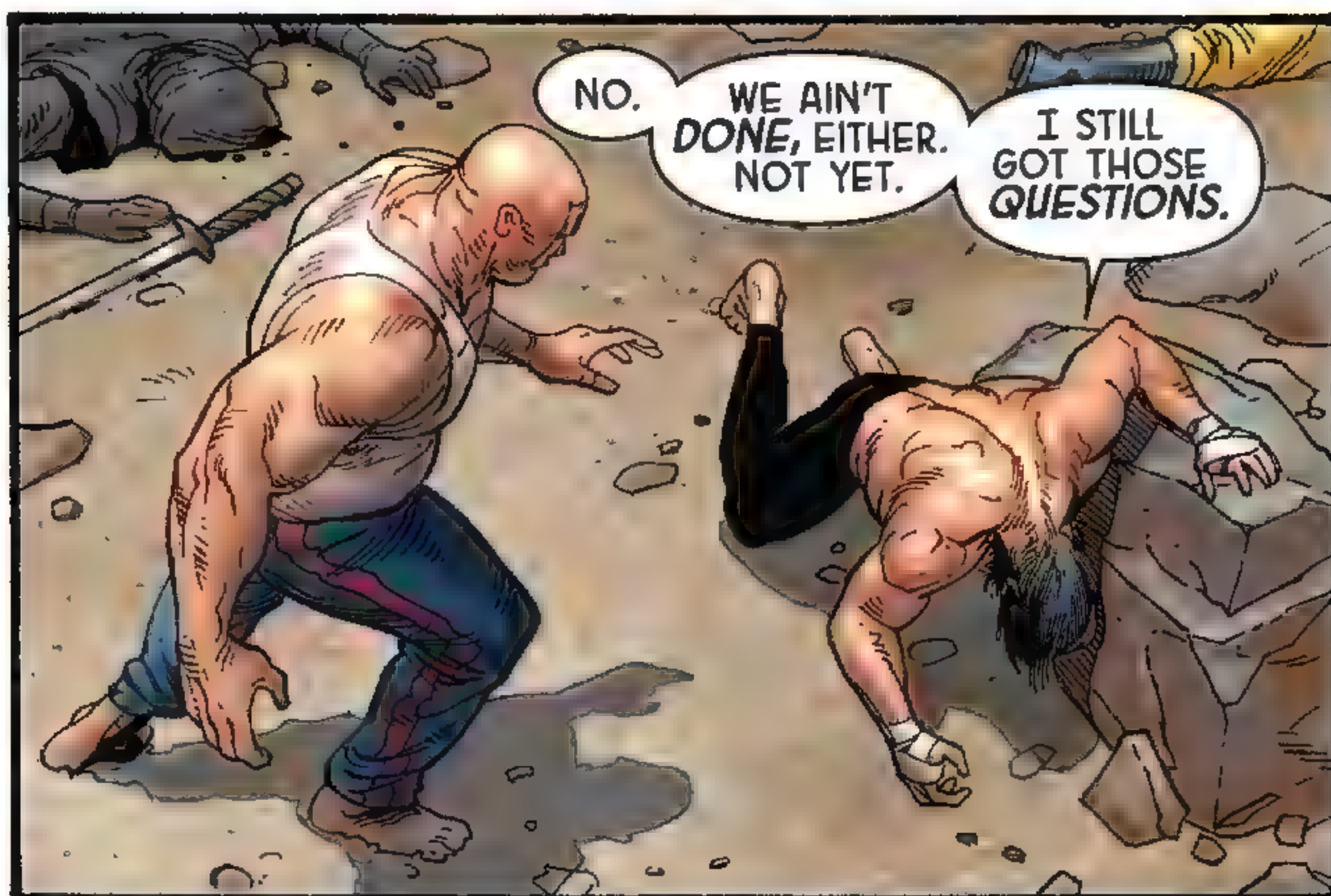
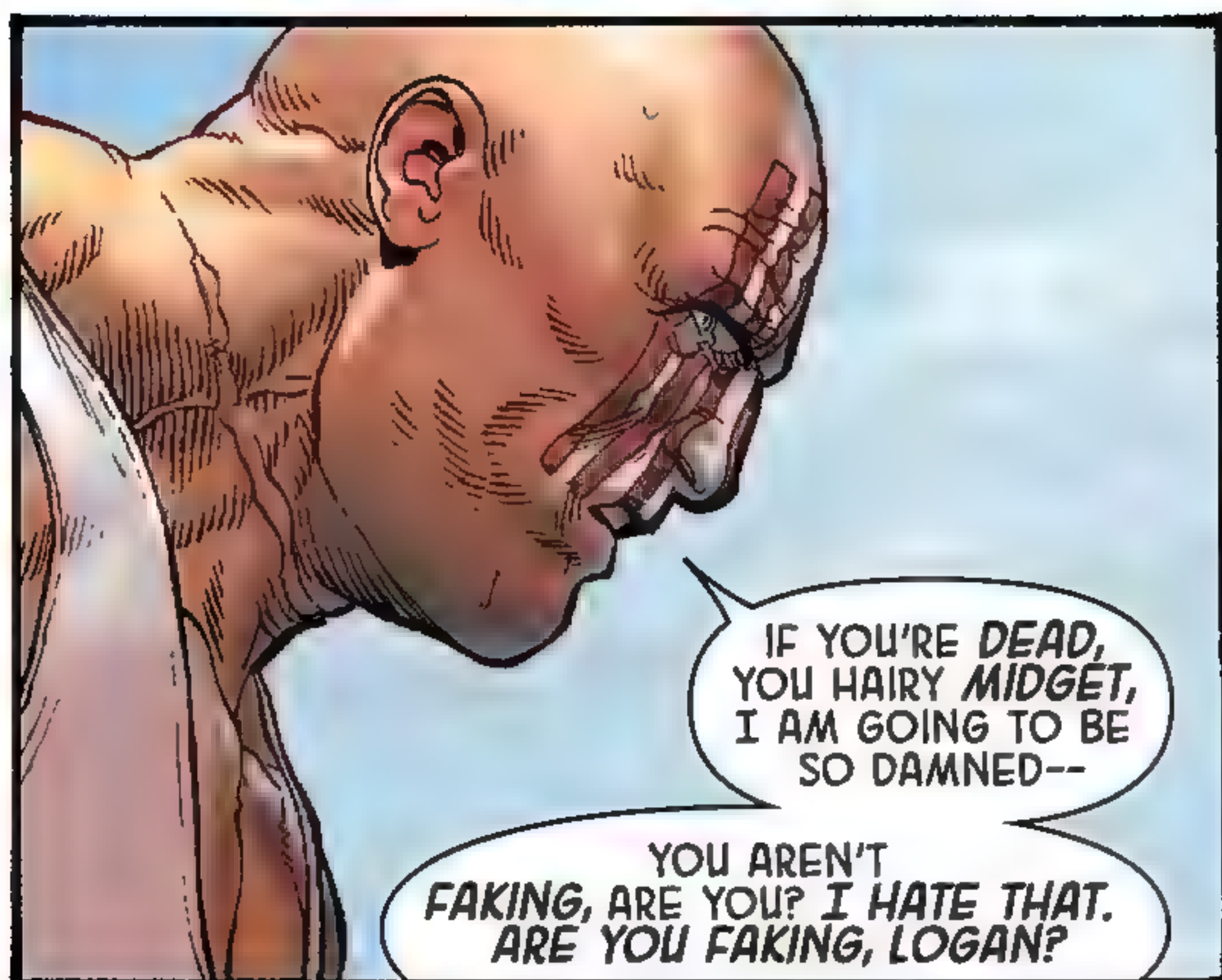
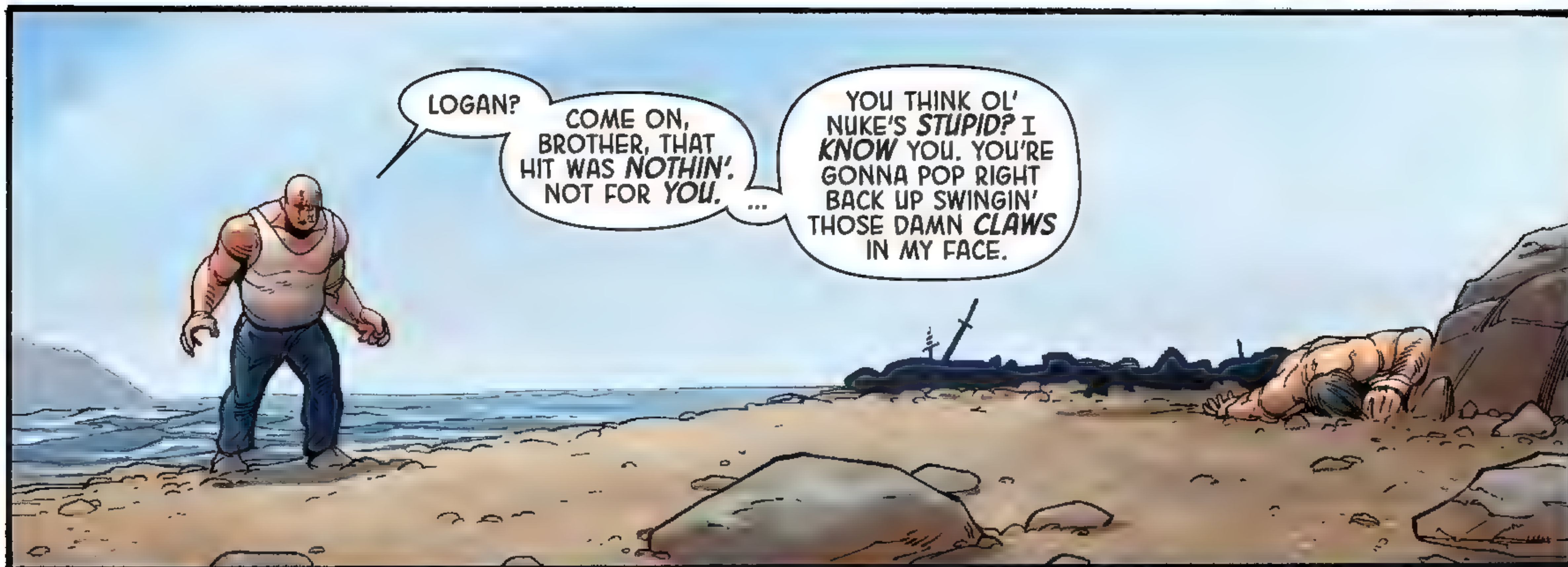


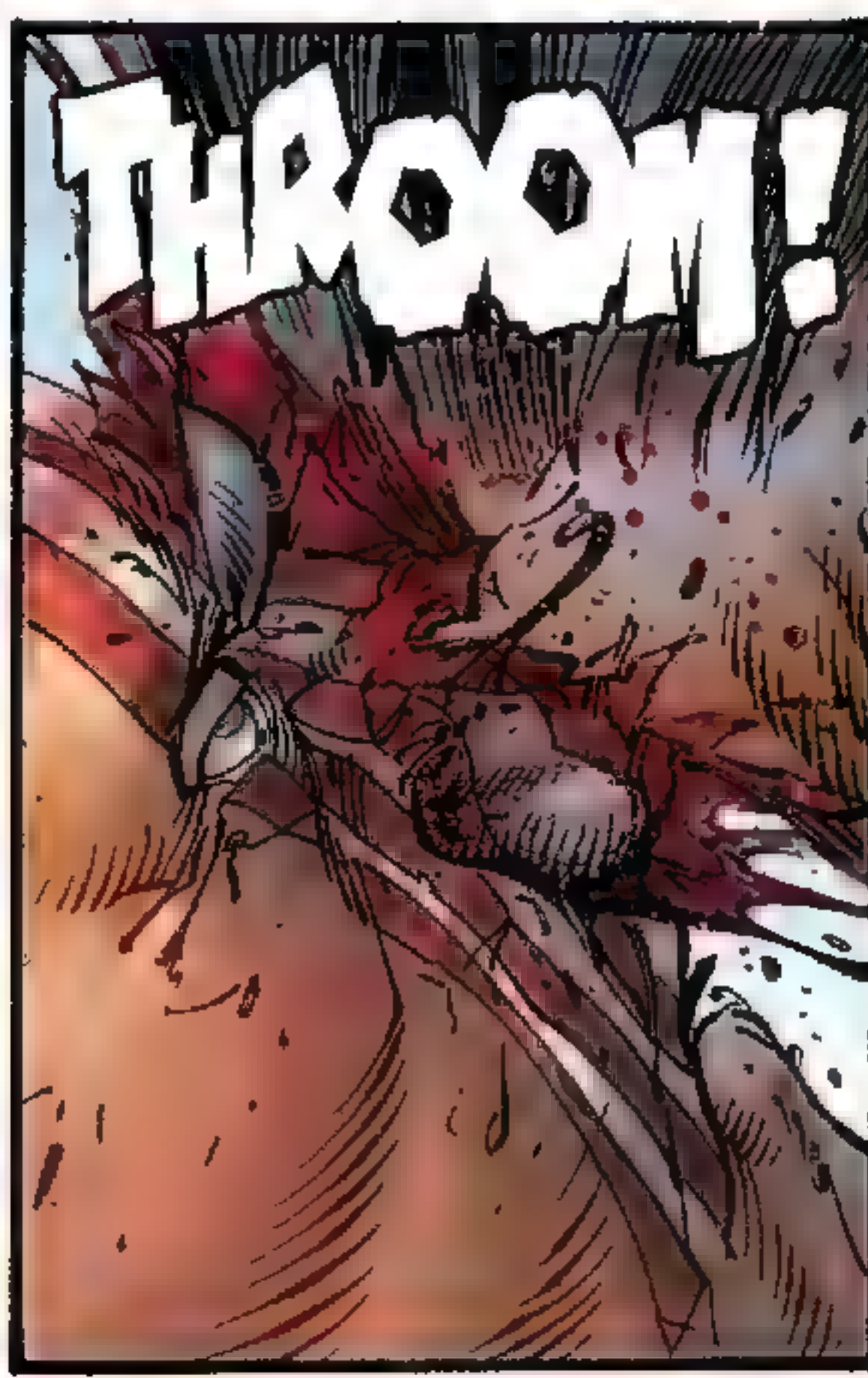
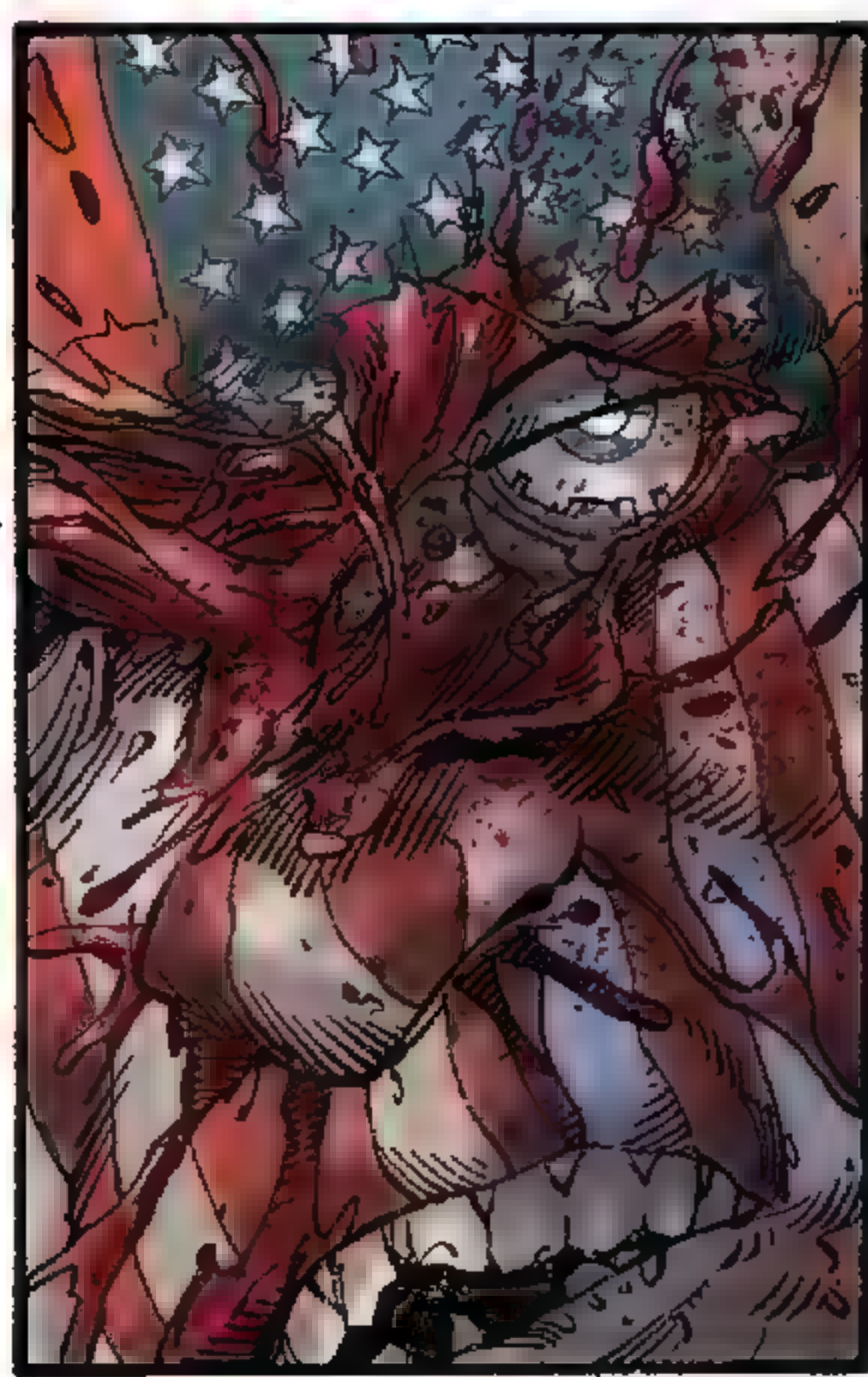
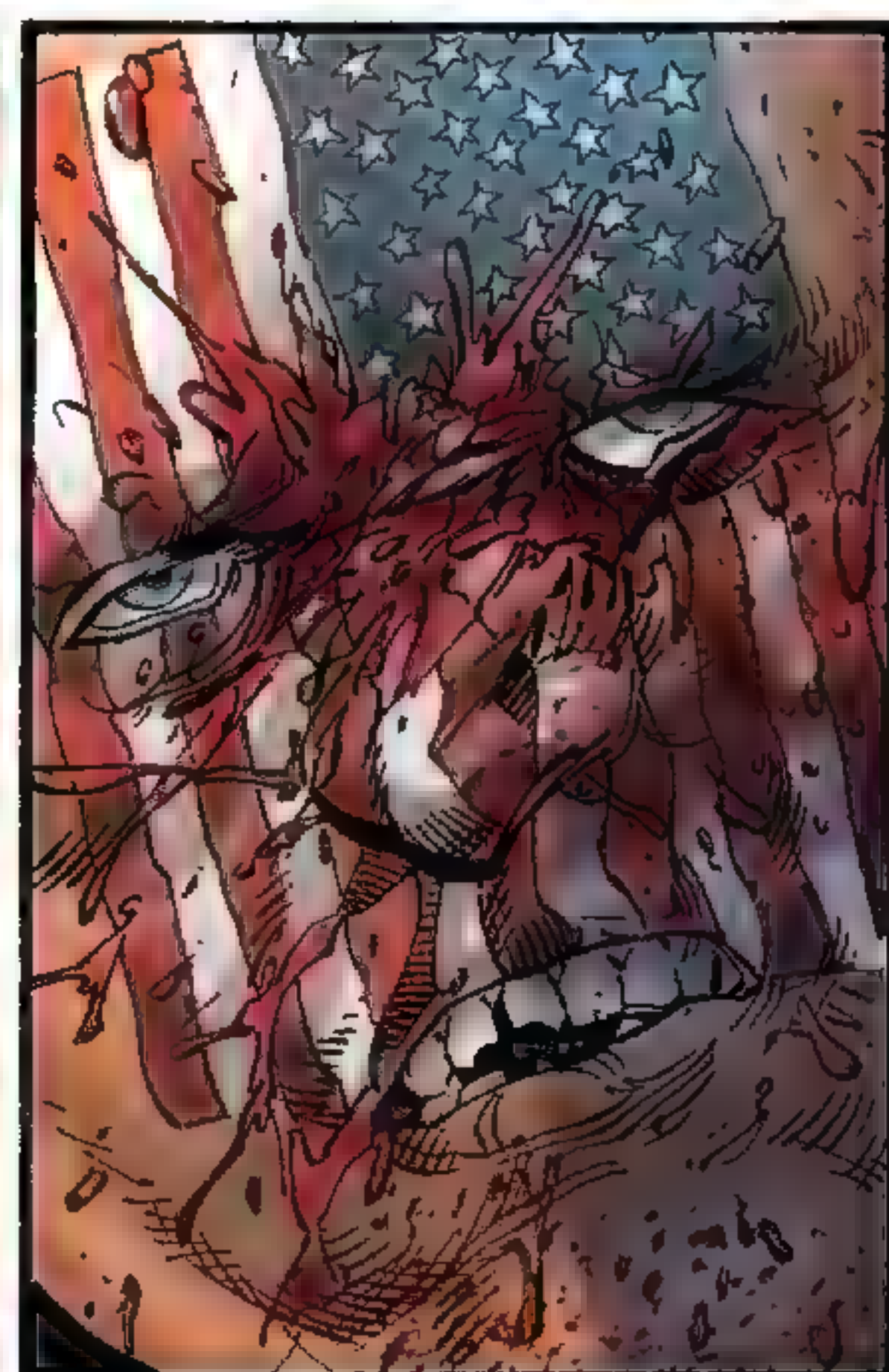
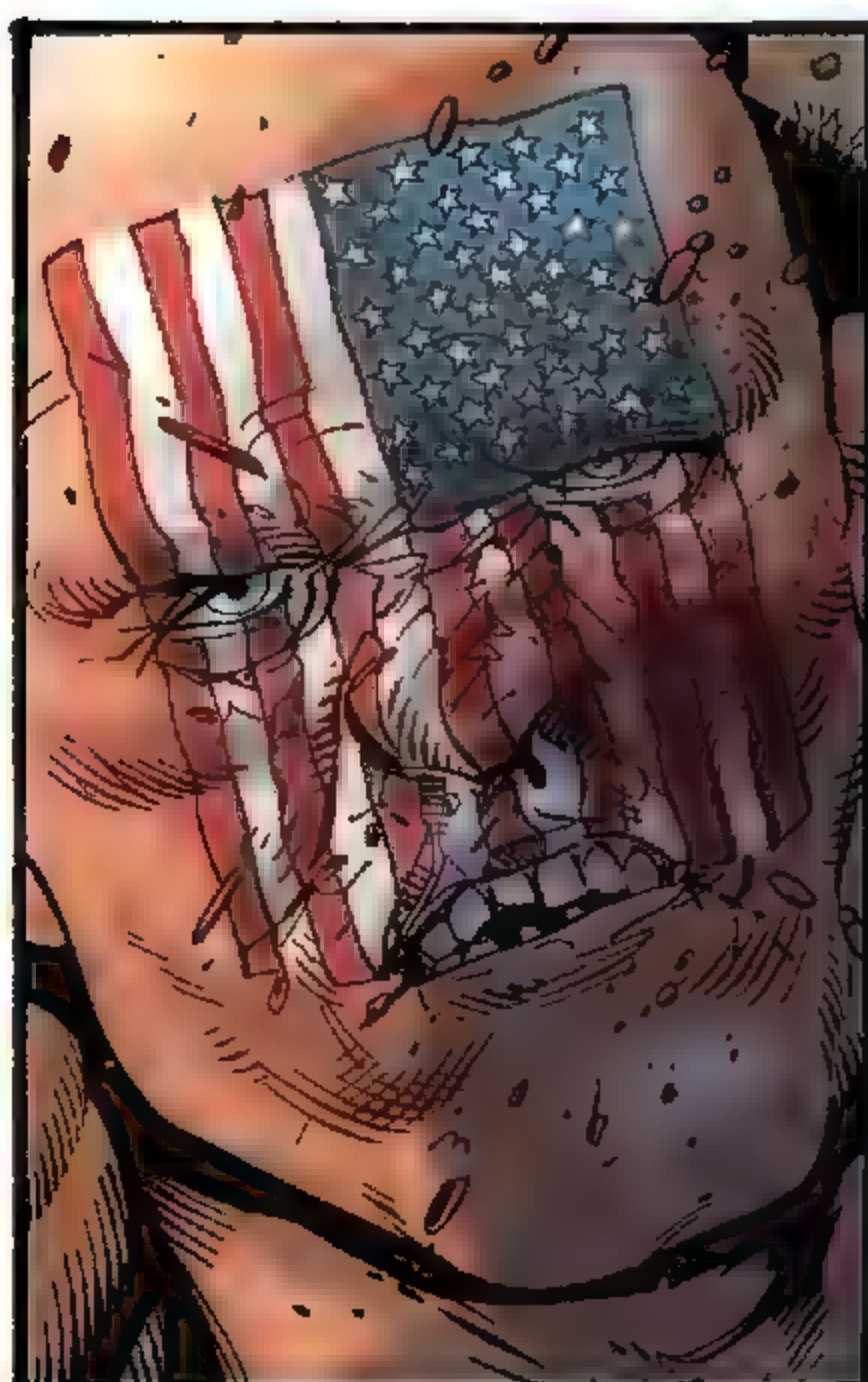
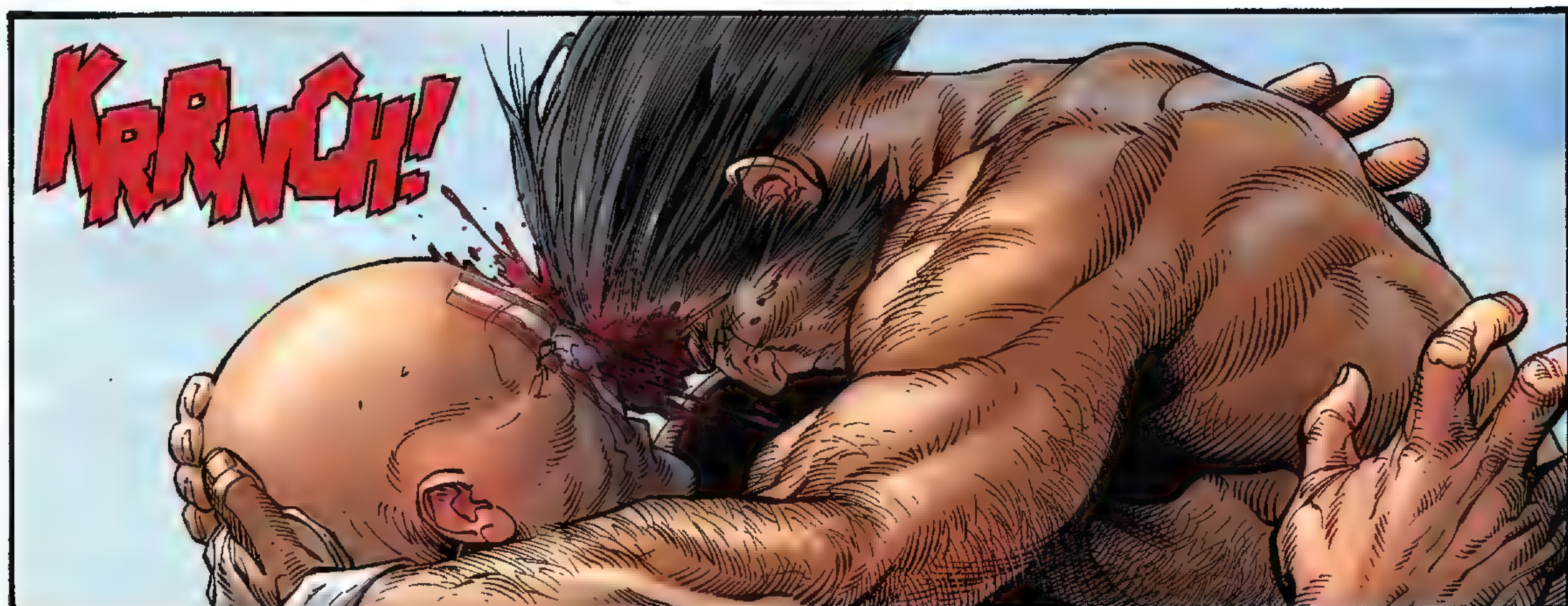
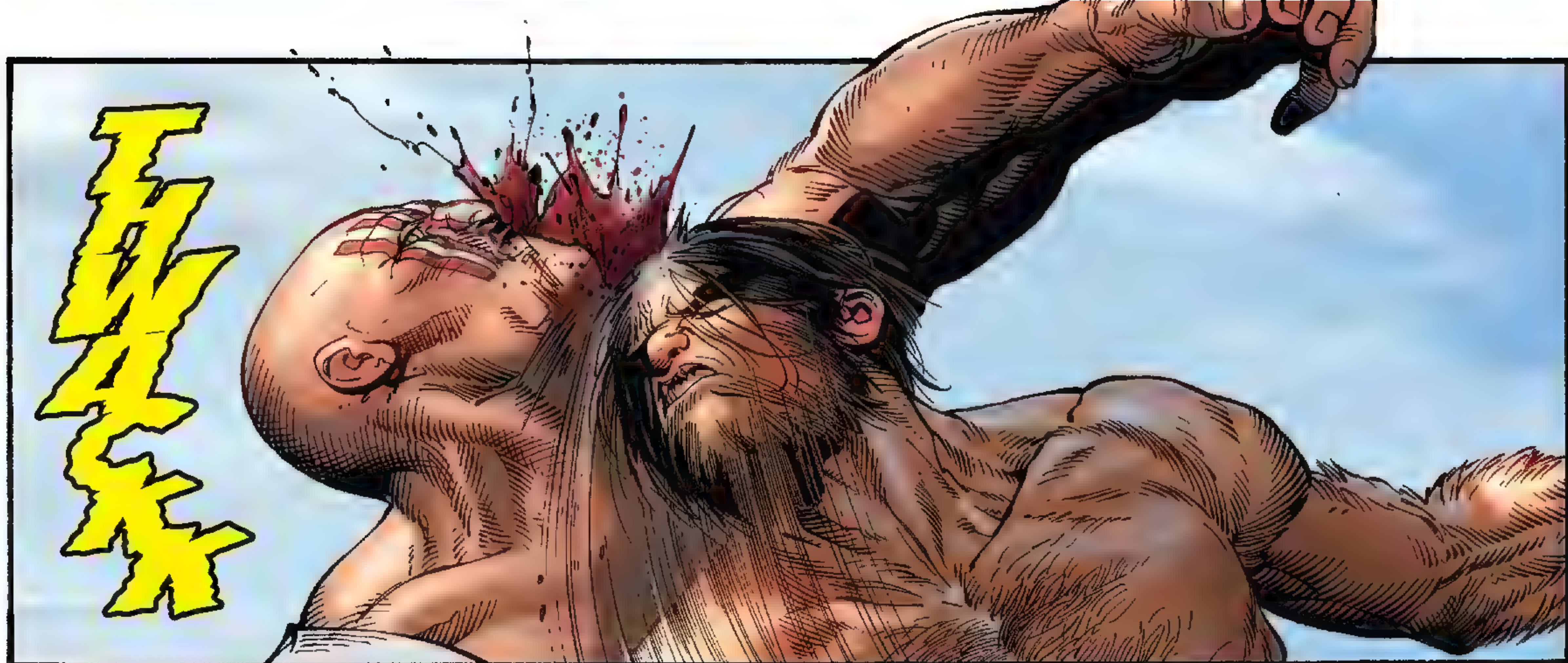


AIN'T MY CONTRACT, BUT I'LL BE HAPPY TO TAKE YOU IN. PAYDAY'S **HUGE**, TOO. BIGGEST BOUNTY I EVER SAW.

WORD'S OUT. ALL OVER THE WORLD. EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT IT. BUT I GOT YOU. GOOD OLD NUKE.

IT'S THE **AMERICAN DREAM**, BABY. ONE BIG SCORE AND I'M KNEE-DEEP IN CANDY AND KITTY 'TIL MY DYING DAY.



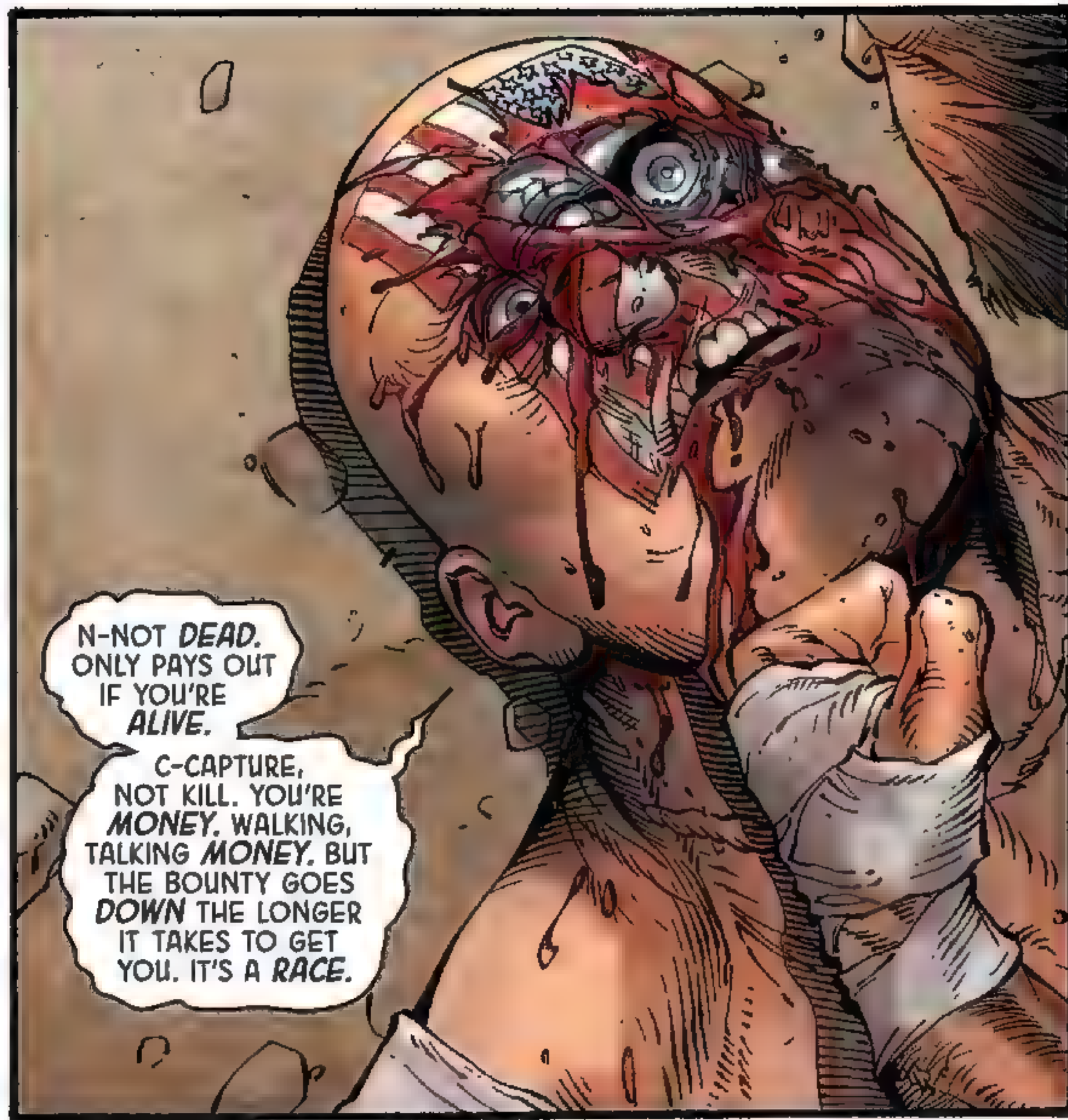




AMERICAN DREAM,
MY ASS. THIS IS
CANADA!

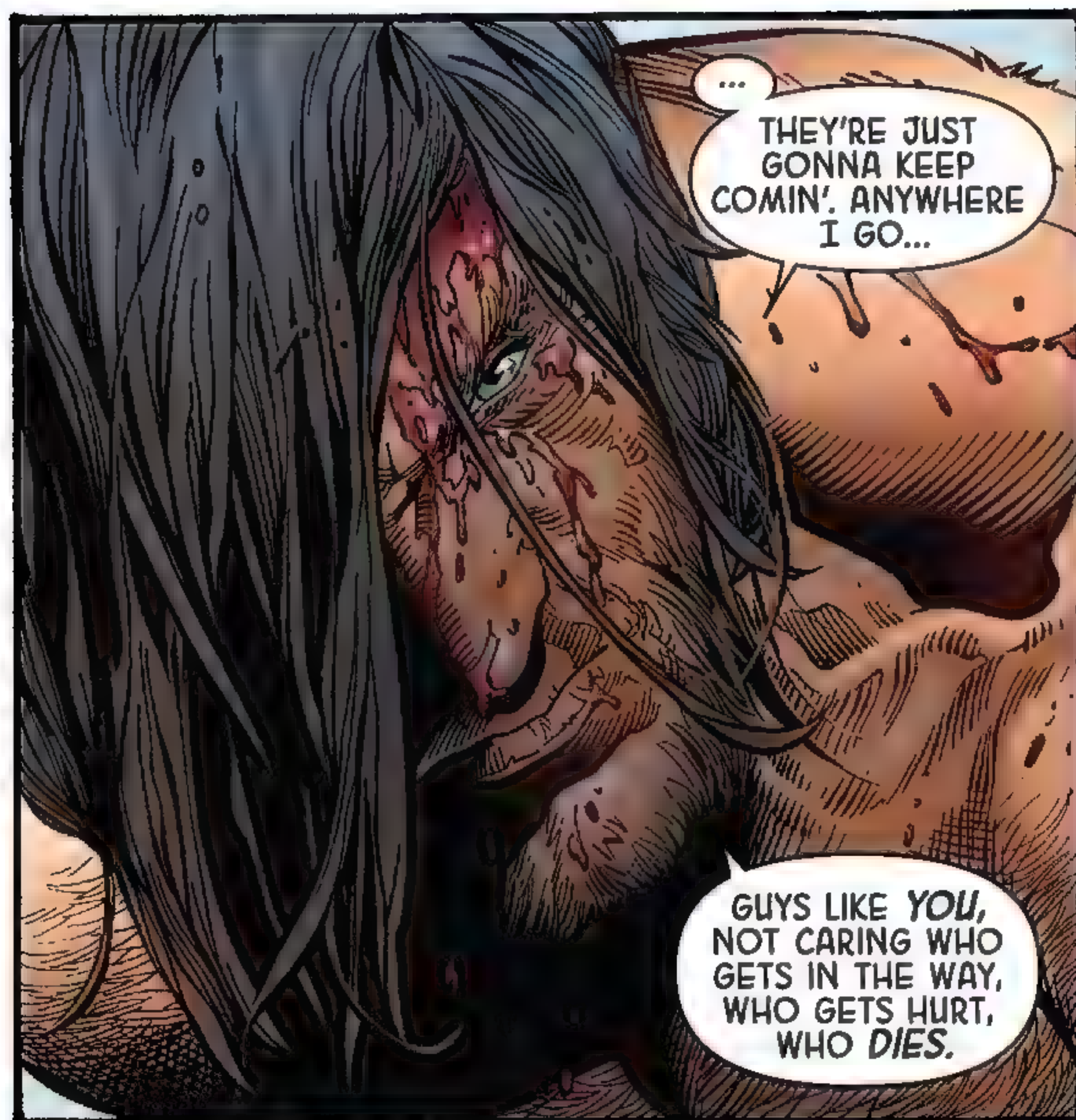
WHO PUT OUT
THE CONTRACT?
WHO WANTS ME
DEAD?!

HEAD



N-NOT DEAD.
ONLY PAYS OUT
IF YOU'RE
ALIVE.

C-CAPTURE,
NOT KILL. YOU'RE
MONEY. WALKING,
TALKING MONEY. BUT
THE BOUNTY GOES
DOWN THE LONGER
IT TAKES TO GET
YOU. IT'S A RACE.



...
THEY'RE JUST
GONNA KEEP
COMIN'. ANYWHERE
I GO...

GUYS LIKE YOU,
NOT CARING WHO
GETS IN THE WAY,
WHO GETS HURT,
WHO DIES.



YOU WANT TO GET OUT
OF THIS ALIVE, NUKE, YOU
DO TWO THINGS.

W-WHAT?

FIRST, SPREAD
THE WORD. TELL
EVERY SON OF A
BITCH THRILL-KILLER
I AIN'T NO DAMNED
PRIZE.

COME AFTER
ME, YOU DIE.
KILL ANYONE
TRYING TO GET
TO ME, YOU
DIE.

YOU'RE THE LAST
GUY I LET WALK
AWAY. EVER. MAKE
SURE THEY
UNDERSTAND. ALL
OF THEM.



SECOND THING.
YOU TELL ME...
RIGHT NOW.
WHO?

C-CONTRACT
CAME OUT OF...
MADRIPOOR.



WHO?

LADY WHO
RUNS THAT WHOLE
POISON CITY. OWNS
EVERYTHING, HAS
EVERYTHING. DOESN'T
NEED NOTHIN'--
EXCEPT THE
WOLVERINE.

YOU
KNOW HER
NAME.

THE GREEN
QUEEN.

VIPER.



NEXT: MADRIPOOR!

EXCLUSIVE

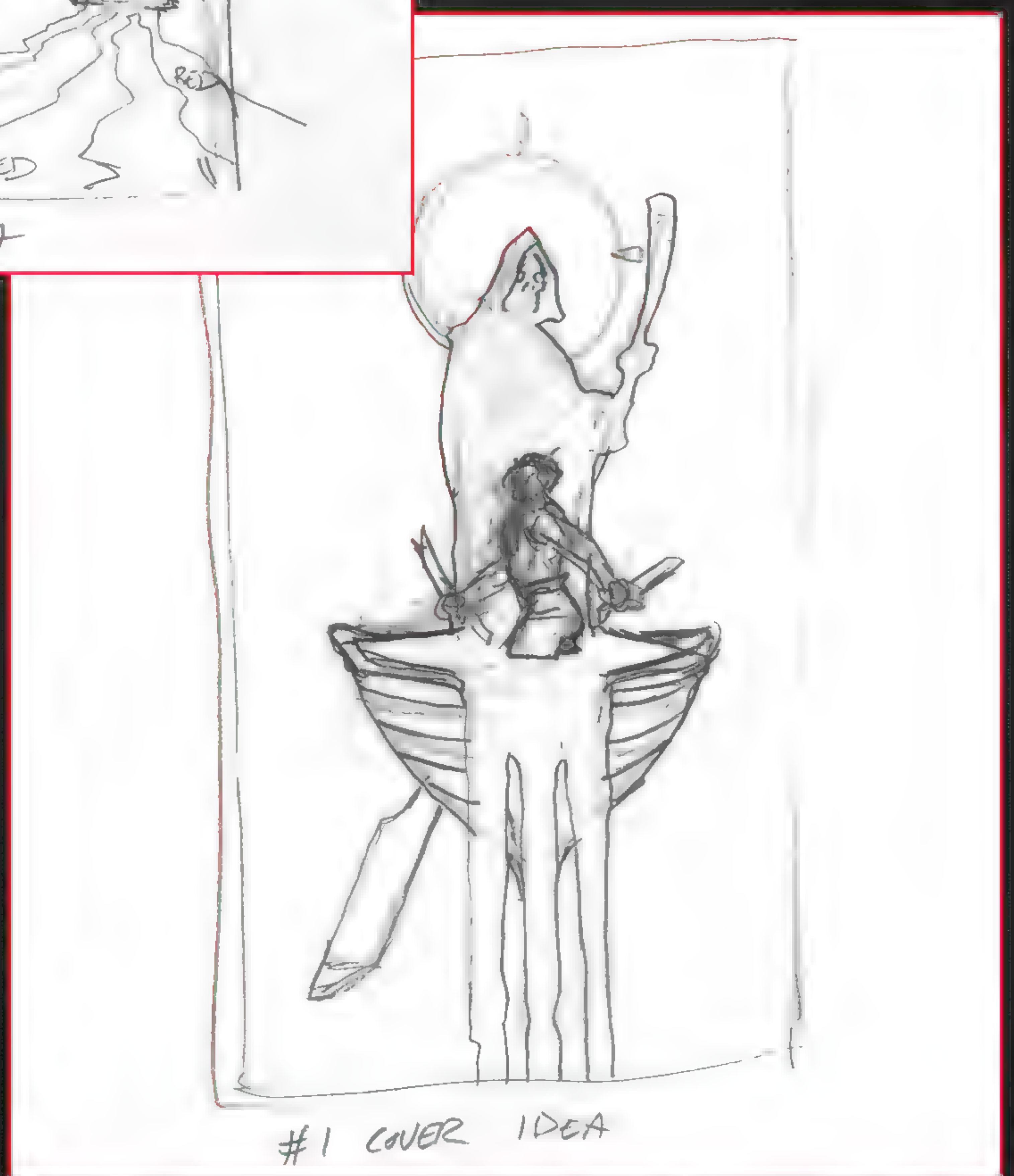
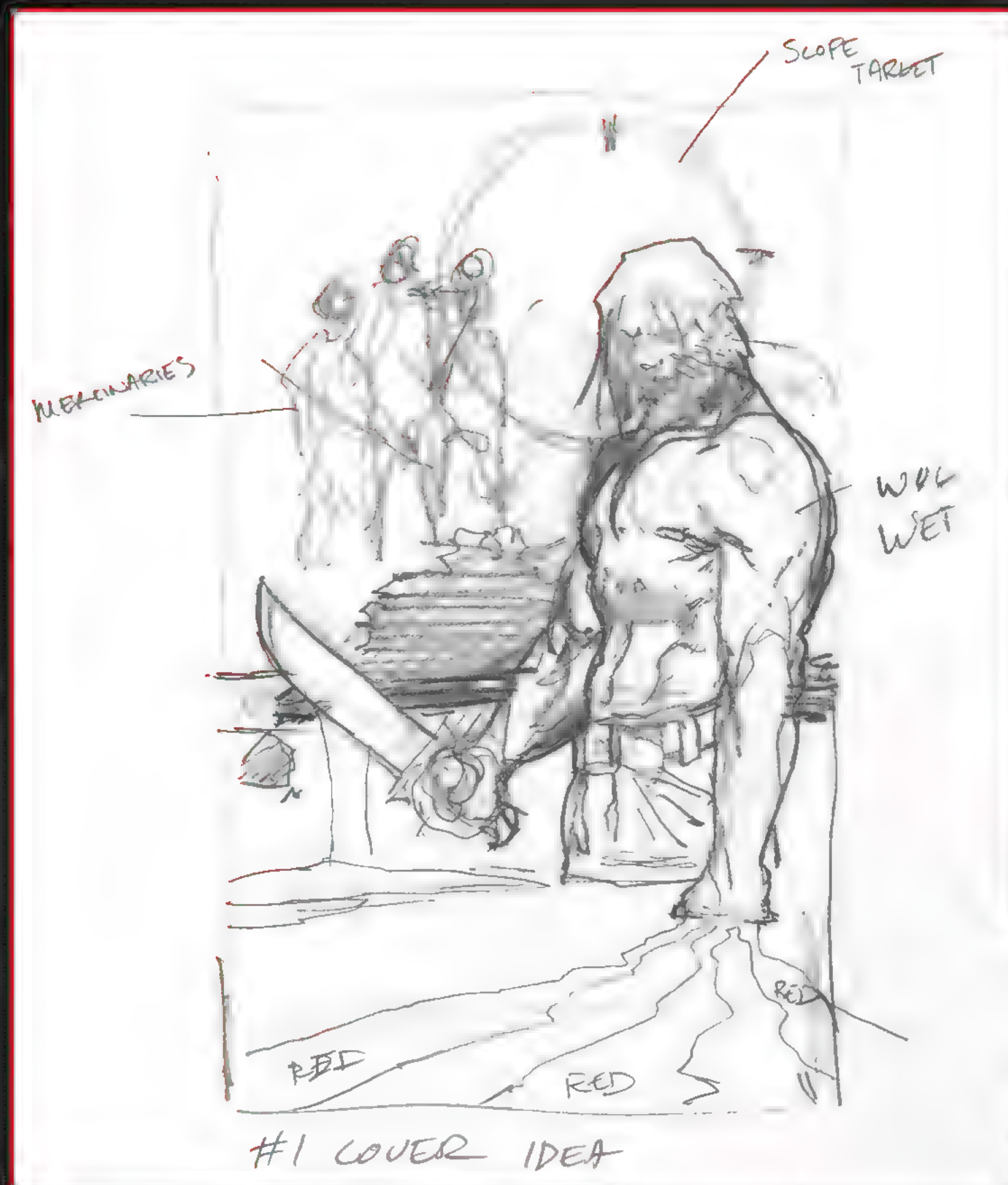
DEATH OF
WOLVERINE

BONUS MATERIAL

COVER SKETCHES FOR ISSUE #1, COMMENTARY BY STEVE MCNIVEN

Cover Sketches 1 and 2:

These are two initial ideas for the cover to issue #1. The second version really didn't work but the first had some elements, like the island and the blood in the water, that I would use later in the final version.



Death of Wolverine #1
cover inks.

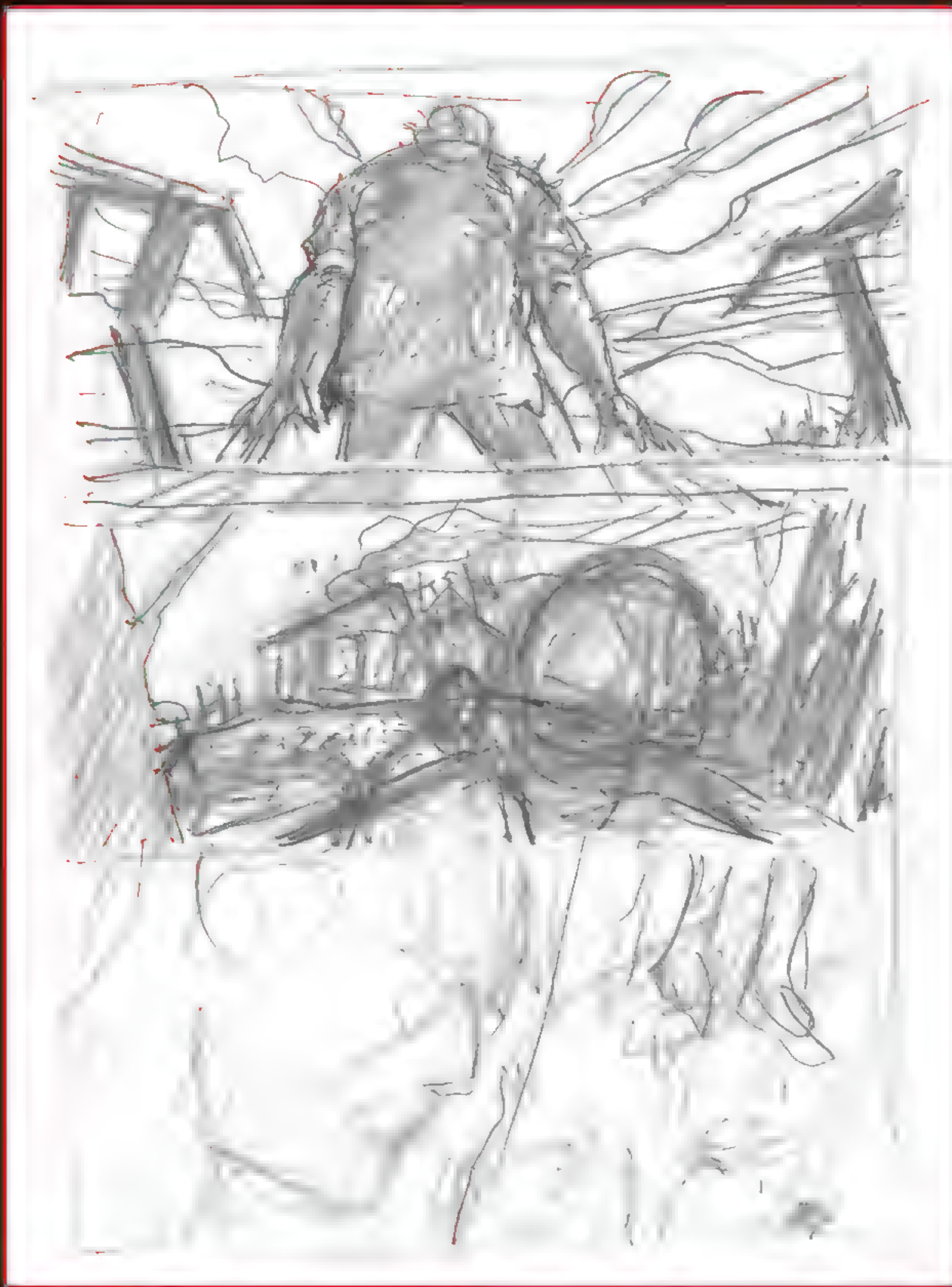


Final colored cover for
Death of Wolverine #1.



INTERIOR SKETCHES FOR ISSUE #1, COMMENTARY BY STEVE MCNIVEN

Pg 2: Here's what an initial thumbnail of a page looks like for me. Lotsa scribbles that probably appear to be a mess, but there is a plan in there somewhere.



"This might be a tall order, but I think this would be a nice spot to try to make this look almost elegant. While yes, this is a gory, awful scene, Wolverine is an artist of death. He doesn't cut people twice when once will do."

-Excerpted from Death of Wolverine #1 script, Charles Soule

Pg 2: This is the next stage after the initial thumbnail, hammering that third panel into shape.



INTERIOR SKETCHES FOR ISSUE #1, COMMENTARY BY STEVE MCNIVEN

Pg 3-4: Initial study for the double spread that will include the title and credits. I wanted a big broad space to float the title, so I thought that Logan's back would work just fine.



**“All comic book characters are like sharks...
they have to keep moving or they die.”**

-Len Wein

INTERIOR SKETCHES FOR ISSUE #1, COMMENTARY BY STEVE MCNIVEN



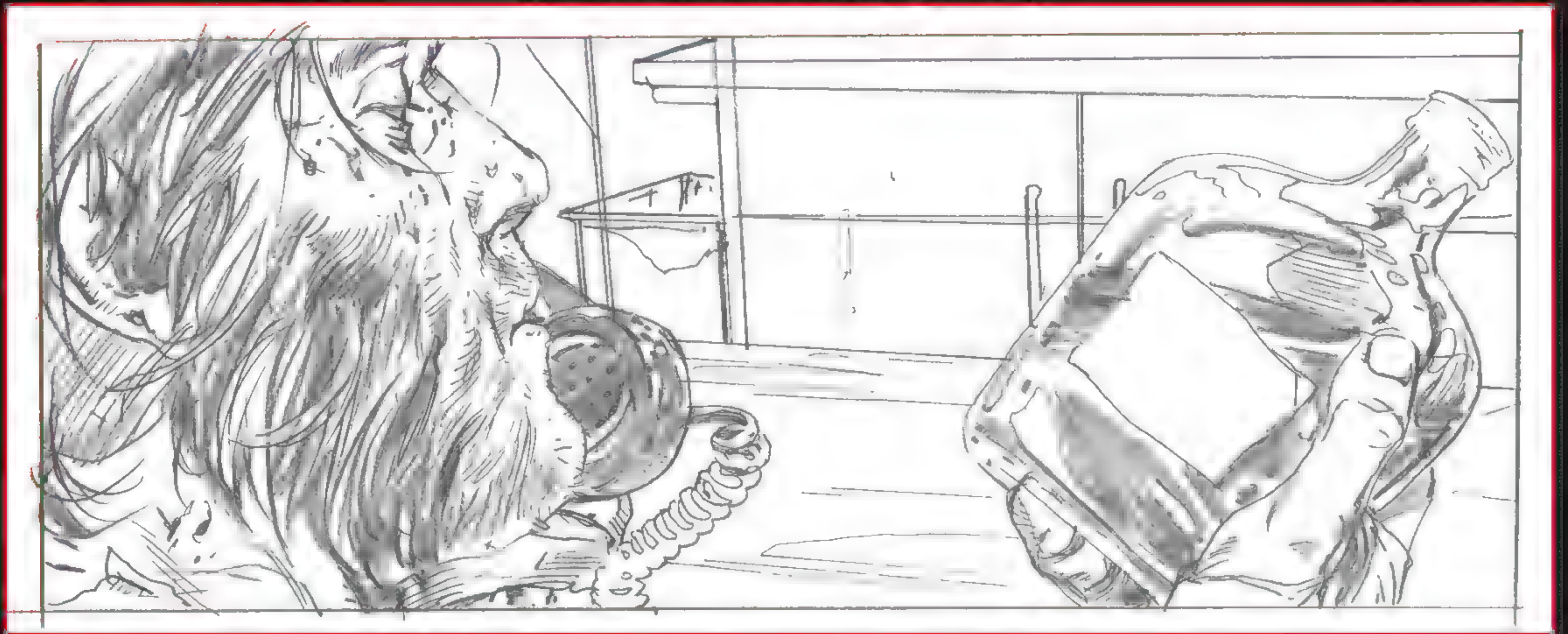
Pg 7: A rough of a close-up of the claws which is, as his healing factor is gone, a messy open wound. I always loved when Barry Windsor Smith did those wonderful close-up's of Wolverine's hands, and really wanted to give it that flavor.



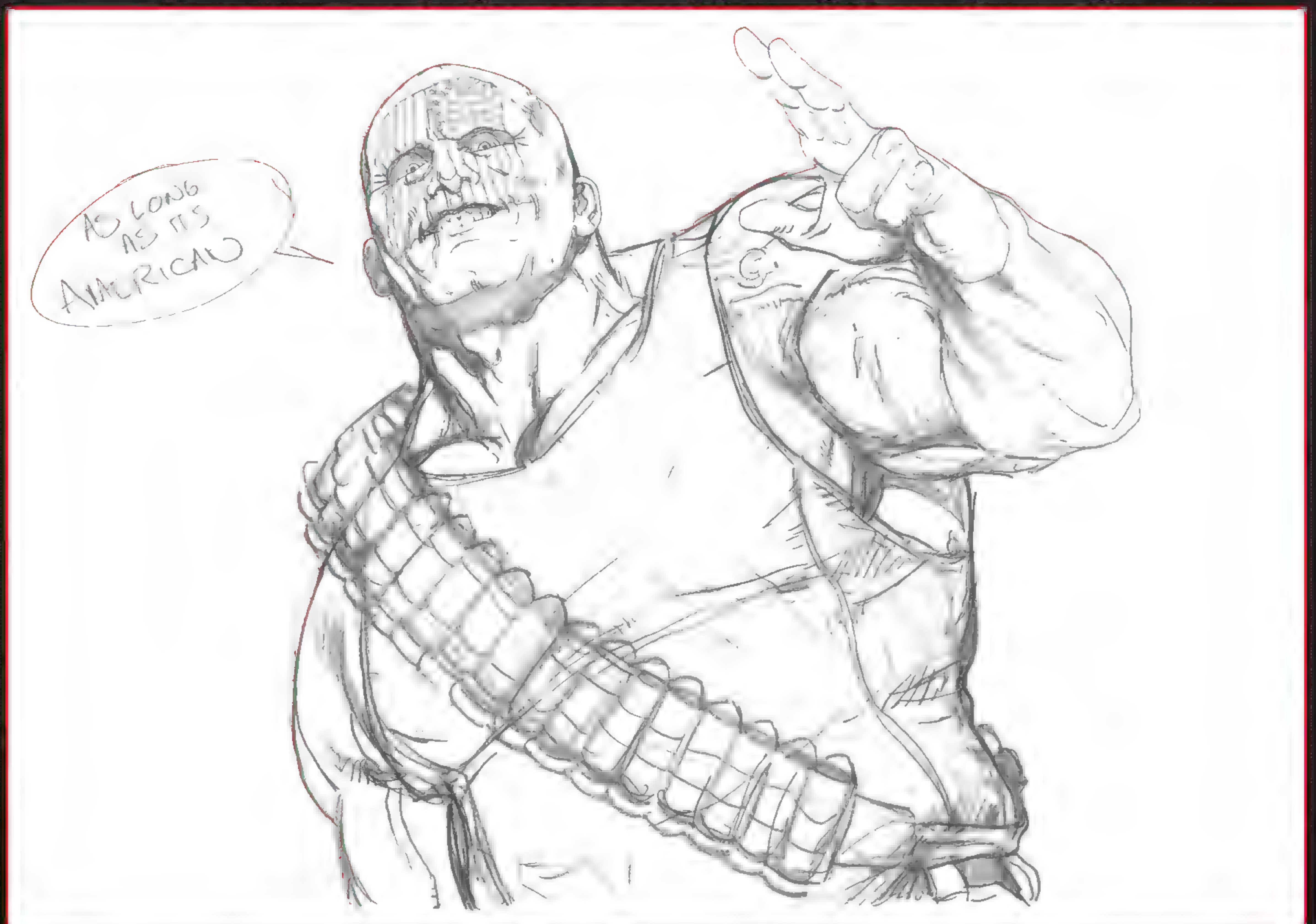
Pg 7: Another angry Logan face rough. He's pulling in his claws, which is a painful thing now, so I wanted to try and get that pain to show through his anger.

INTERIOR SKETCHES FOR ISSUE #1, COMMENTARY BY STEVE MCNIVEN

Pg 9: Logan with a bottle of Canadian whiskey. What more can be said? I had great fun researching this :)



Pg 11: My first real go at getting Nuke locked down. Charles had a great idea of the guy as a gone to seed wrestler, so I went with it. I thought that as he has some sort of plastic polymer skin that perhaps, like an old rug, caused his hair to wear off. No eyebrows, no hair whatsoever. Anywhere. Add a beer belly and some fat on the pecs and there ya go... one creepy bad guy ready for a fight.



INTERIOR SKETCHES FOR ISSUE #1, COMMENTARY BY STEVE MCNIVEN

Pg 19: This is a rough for the point in the story where Nuke confronts Logan after tossing him onto the rocks. I wanted to get that looming mountain of a man feel from Nuke, who thinks he's in control of the situation.



Pg 12: A close-up of an angry Nuke. Although he has gone to seed, he's still a threatening individual.

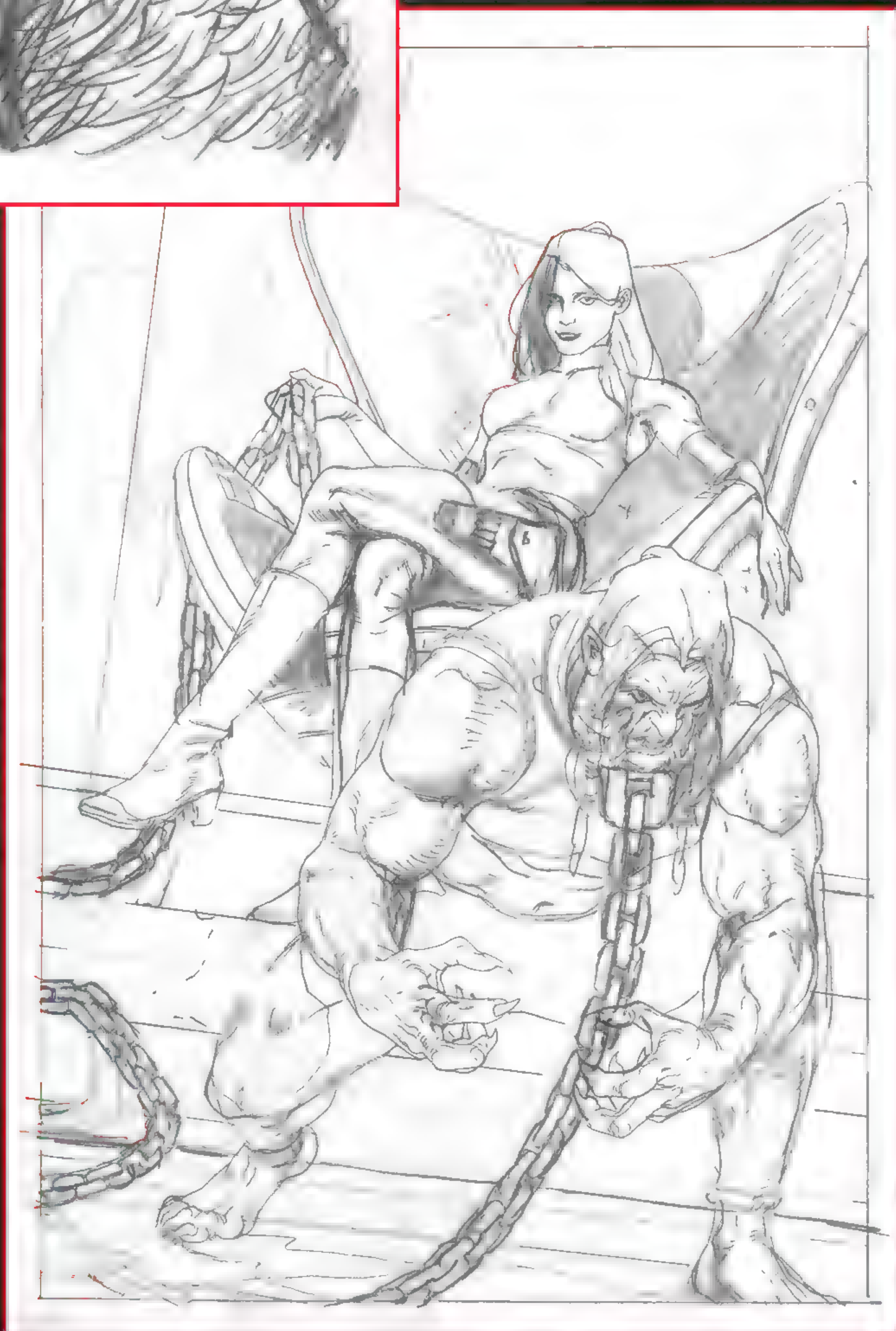


INTERIOR SKETCHES FOR ISSUE #1, COMMENTARY BY STEVE MCNIVEN



Pg 21: A rough of Logan with no patience left for poor old Nuke. I always feel bad for Jay (my inker) as I cover Logan in hair.

Pg 22: Here is an initial layout for the final page of the book, done 8 x 10 inches, ready to blow up and lightbox onto an art board. Which I did and got mostly done before tossing it and starting again, as I felt that Sabretooth was too small in relation to Viper. It happens, luckily not too often! But you have to go back and fix it, no matter how far along the road you might have wandered in error.



INTERIOR SKETCHES FOR ISSUE #1, COMMENTARY BY STEVE MCNIVEN

Pg 20: Nuke getting a beat-down at the end of the book. A real brutal fight that has Logan using his head instead of his claws to pound Nuke into submission.



“I mean, you give birth, you try to steer the child in the direction you believe any good person will go, and then they go wherever the hell they want to go, regardless.”

-Len Wein

INTERVIEW WITH WOLVERINE CO-CREATOR LEN WEIN

So, starting at the beginning, what are your earliest recollections about the creation of the character? How did that come about and who was involved creatively at that point?

The earliest recollections I have of the character proper start about a year or so before *Giant-Sized X-Men* came out, I was doing a book called *Strange Tales Starring Brother Voodoo*, which you guys may or may not remember, and I got called into Editor-in-Chief Roy Thomas's office one day and he said, "Let's sit down and chat." And I said, "Sure what's up?" And he says, "I hate you!" I said, "Oh good. That's good to know from my editor! No, seriously, what do you hate me for?" Roy says, "I can't write accents to save my life. And I love what you're doing with *Brother Voodoo*, with the Caribbean accents, Haitian and Jamaican and whatnot." I love to do that stuff. And I said, "I'm sorry, I don't even know how to teach you to do that sort of thing." He says, "I've got a name I've been sitting on for a while, and I want to see how you'd handle a Canadian character." I said, "Sure, what's the name?" He said, "Wolverine!" I said, "That sounds terrific!" He said, "Go! Make me something interesting." So I went home and I did what I always do when I create a new character, I did research. I looked in the encyclopedia (there are some who may remember what an encyclopedia is) and I did a bunch of research on wolverines. And wolverines, I discovered very quickly, are short, hairy, vicious creatures with razor-sharp claws who are fearless and will take on absolutely anything—animals ten to twelve times their size. And I went, "DONE!"



So the name came first?



Yes, Roy gave me the name. And I came up with all the rest of it.

And he specifically wanted a Canadian hero?

Yes, that's exactly what it was. I decided to make him a mutant when I was working on it because there had been talk for at least a couple of years at that point about maybe someday reviving the *X-Men* book as an international gang of mutants, as Roy liked to put it, much like DC's equivalent *Blackhawk* book about the team of pilots from different countries. So I said, "Hey, let's make him a mutant. That way whoever winds up writing that book will have at least one character to pick from if he wants to."

So it was setting the stage for eventually what would become *Giant-Sized X-Men*?

Yes. Well, not knowing I was going to be writing the book when that happened. I thought someone else was going to be writing the book then. But I just figured, "Here's some stuff to pick from if you want."

And at that point, Roy was still Editor-in-Chief and you were the primary editor?

Yes, I was his assistant editor. There were only two editors at that time—Editor-in-Chief and the assistant. How the hell we survived I couldn't begin to tell you!

When *Giant-Sized X-Men* came around, and you were writing that, were you editor-in-chief at that point?

Yes, I had just become E-i-C. After six months as Roy's assistant, he said, "Well, I've decided to give up the job and go freelance. So, Ha!, you're now Editor-in-Chief." And I'm going, "I just turned twenty-five years old and I'm running a company?" And I was!

And that was during the period of time it seemed you guys were taking turns with you, Gerry Conway—

—and Marv Wolfman, Archie Goodwin, yup. It basically was an impossible job. We were supposed to edit something like fifty-four books a month. And now any senior editor has, what, a half dozen titles?

Yea, ideally a half dozen. But we're putting close to twelve to fourteen titles a month out at least per editor. It's crazy. But nothing compared to those old days. That sounds fabulous.

That was great fun. I always refer to it as living in the Wild West. We winged it every day!

I bet! Creating new ways of doing things. So with the character, would you say most of the influence for the character came from your research?

Oh, absolutely! With the initial character, I always assumed that if he came back, or if people did stuff with him, or if I myself decided to bring him back or the Hulk or someone else, if no one used him for *X-Men*, that the character was going to evolve. I mean, any good character has to evolve or die. All comic book characters are like sharks—they have to keep moving or

they die. So, it was a one-shot story, I wasn't going to put vast amounts of characterization into the character, because who knew if we'd ever use him again or see him again. But there was enough there to do what I wanted to do. The funny thing was, after what Roy wanted to see, I thought I did the worst Canadian accents in history. I didn't use the "aBOOTS" or things like that. He ended up sounding like he was more Australian than he was Canadian, and the funny thing about it was that in the first cartoon, he WAS Australian!

And you set the stage for the character, but then several creators—Chris Claremont, Frank Miller, Larry Hama—they really took the character and spent so much time with him. What was that like, seeing what the other writers did with the character you created?



I mean, it's always fascinating to me to see how characters evolve once you put something out in the world—it's almost literally like being a parent. I mean you give birth, you try to steer the child in the direction you believe any good person will go, and then they go wherever the hell they want to go, regardless.

Right, right! You know, of all the different stories created with Wolverine, were there any specific favorites of yours? Any favorites of yours that stood out?

Well, I really like the first Wolverine mini-series—the basis for the second movie. I thought that was a terrific story. I love the fact that Chris and Frank took the character to places you never expected him to go.

And looking at all those stories over the years, looking back, and you created the character back in '74—

Yup, '74. This is his 40th anniversary, in fact, this year!

Yes, it's crazy! At what point did you step back and think, "Wow, we have something here." Something that's much larger than what you and Roy initially talked about.

Well, the audience always tells you that. You never know. I've come up with stories over the years where I've said, "This is going to kick ass. Everyone's going to love this story." And then we find out that people think, "Oh, that was nice." And then I come up with stories and think, "Oh, well I made the deadline. At least it's on time." And I would get huge, wonderful mail and the character would suddenly evolve.

Let me get back to one point about the character—I always thought when I created him that what made Wolverine a hero was that if he did have those bestial instincts—and his inclination was that if you cross him, he guts you. The fact is that he popped the claws and he goes right for your abdomen and then he stops the blade a quarter of an inch from your skin. Because disemboweling people is bad! That's what makes him a hero. And then one issue when they were facing the Hellfire Club during John and Chris's run on the book, Wolverine goes berserk and disembowels a whole bunch of people and suddenly he's the most popular member of the X-Men! So it shows you what the hell I know!

It's amazing that at this point not only is Wolverine such a popular comic character, but he's gone beyond that and become a huge part of pop culture as a whole.

Oh, absolutely! I realized that about five or six years ago when I was looking at a bunch of Marvel products in the outside market—Marvel toys or Marvel clothes or whatever—and I realized here's a little montage of little Marvel characters. And the two foremost characters on every piece of that stuff were Wolverine and Spider-Man. And I went—oh, my God, he's up there! In all probability he's probably superseded Spider-Man as the iconic image of Marvel.

Quite possibly, yeah. And you know, coming back around to the reason why we're here—with the character's long life, did you ever envision him dying? And if so, what were your thoughts on that?

Well, I never imagined him dying or going away. Let me rephrase that: even at this moment, I never imagine him dying and STAYING away. As opposed to going away. It makes for



great story fodder (I haven't read the story but I'm sure it's going to be terrific) but let's be honest—he's not staying away. He's the most lucrative character Marvel has these days. There's no sane way a major corporation is going to decide, "You know, let's knock off the guy who makes us the most money." He'll be back, I don't know how quickly—I don't know what they're going to do with that gap in the Marvel Universe in the interim, I can't wait to find out as a reader—

—the gap is half the fun sometimes.

Yeah, they've done wonderful things with Captain America when he died, especially Dan (Slott) when he did Spider-Man when Doc Ock took over Peter Parker's body, it was brilliant stuff! Those were great comics to read. But you knew, eventually, Peter was going to go jumping back into that body, and Cap was going to get resurrected somehow, partly because they're iconic, and the audience over the long haul wouldn't be able to take not having a Steve Rogers Captain America or a Peter Parker Spiderman or a Logan Wolverine. I think it's also because when there's a multi-billion-dollar movie coming out in six months where Steve Rogers is Captain America, I guess you've gotta bring him back!

Len, we've covered a lot of topics so far...is there anything we haven't covered?

Well, I don't think anywhere in this conversation have we talked about Dave Cockrum and his contribution, which was considerable to all of the X-Men stuff, not just to Wolverine.



I mean, the major things he contributed to Wolverine—three major things, which were critical—were the mask that became the standard mask for the character in his first costume. Because when John Romita, Sr. and I designed him, he had that wolverine-like mask with the tiny ears and the whiskers and the whole dance, and Dave hated that. He said to me, "I hate that mask, I don't want to draw that mask." And I said to him, "You got anything better in mind?" And he came back with that iconic one and I said, "Okay! That's better. We'll use that." But he's also the guy who designed Logan's face without the mask, with the mutton chops and the "someone-please-get-that-man-a-hair-detangler" haircut. I also believe it was Dave's idea for the claws to be organic as opposed to mechanical. I had always envisioned them as mechanical. My thought was you make them out of Adamantium. They can telescope, 'cause they can fit through those little hangers on the back of the glove that the claws come out of, and because Adamantium is indestructible, you can do a telescoping claw that really only needs to be one molecule thick and it's still never going to break off. Then my first thought after that was that if we use the claws on something stainless steel, wouldn't they just rip off the back of the

gloves? So I figured the gloves were Adamantium as well, and they're covered with cloth, so that's why they would stay on and he could cut up anything he wanted to. And then after I left the book there was the day where, I don't know if it was Chris or Dave—I believe it was Dave—said, "What if they really come out of his arm?" And it's a great bit—it's utterly illogical because he really wouldn't be able to move his wrists if that's how they worked, but who cares, it's a great bit!

Yeah, exactly, and it's gotten us miles and miles of story out of that great idea.

Exactly! So I want to make sure credit is given to Dave Cockrum, God rest him. He was (a) a brilliant designer and (b) one of the nicest guys I've ever worked with and (c) a great loss to the business.

Yeah and it's amazing to look at what a fantastic designer what Dave was, because so many of the current designs of the X-Men or the Legion of Super-heroes are either still his designs or based off his designs and haven't changed over the past 30 or 40 years.

Yeah, he was just one of those guys who if John R. wasn't available, or even if John was, and they needed a new character, and Dave was around, they'd go, "Hey, you got ten minutes?" 'Cause they'd use him to design the characters. There's an issue of the Hulk called "You Just Don't Quarrel With The Quintronic Man." Which is one of the dumbest villains I ever created—a robot that's so complicated it takes five guys to operate him—a guy in each shoulder joint, a guy in each hip joint and a guy in the head—and it takes the five of them working in coordination to make the robot work. And the robot of course says, "You can't get five guys to agree on everything, not even hamburgers!" It was going to be a throwaway at the beginning of the story, but Dave comes in and designs the character and I say, "Oh, I guess he's going to be in it for the whole issue." Because it was too cool to throw away on a two-page or three-page bit at the beginning of the story. The design was just terrific. That was Dave—everything he did had an extraordinary aesthetic sense to it.



You're absolutely right. And thanks for bringing Dave up, too—he contributed so much to the character over the years.

Oh, absolutely. Dave was that wonderful combination of ultimate fan boy and ultimate professional—you know that whatever he did professionally was stunning to look at, and as a fan boy he kept that enthusiasm and never stopped coming up with ideas. It was always, well, "What if?" Which are the best two words that any comic book writer, or any writer, frankly, can ever use. The stories come from "What if?" "What if he could do this, what if he couldn't? What if he wasn't really this?"

And besides Dave, there's only one other thing I want to cover while we're talking—somehow on the Internet over the past decade or more, some idiot got the idea that the whole original concept of Wolverine was that he WAS a Wolverine—highly evolved by the High Evolutionary—no, no and no.

Yeah, I remember seeing that—that was really strange to me at the time.

That's because it is. It's wrong, it never was the case—I always envisioned him as a human being. That's what I write about—I write about human beings. I don't care what their powers are—unless I suppose I was writing Rocket Raccoon!

Well that's all the rage these days!

It sure is—great movie! I saw it over the weekend—terrific film. The Marvel movie batting average is amazing.

So happy with it over here, everyone is just ecstatic. It was so nice to finally see it and have it be such a terrific film, and then getting close to 100 million in the box office, it was just amazing.

Well it deserves it—it was funny, it was fun, it's exciting. And it goes straight to the established Marvel mythos while hanging out on the other side of the universe, and I think it's just fine!

Exactly—just a bunch of flawed people hanging around and trying to do the right thing.

Yeah, which defines the Marvel Universe, really.



DEATH OF WOLVERINE #1—DIRECTOR'S CUT

PAGE ONE

Splash: We are in British Columbia, up in the mountains near the coast. We're looking at an isolated mountain cabin built up on a crag. Sitting on the front stoop of the cabin, we have Logan. His head is bowed, and his claws are popped. He's spattered with blood, much of it his own. This is the pose of a man who has just lived through the latest in what seems like an endless series of battles.

We want to convey that he's a warrior, a fighter, but one who's facing the reality that this could be all that he is.



You can choose whatever shot you want, but I see this almost as a silhouette, looking past Logan, so we can see the sea stretching out in the distance. In other words, Logan is on his front porch post-battle, looking out at the sea, ruminating, and we'd pose it so that we'd have the sea visible. If you'd rather do a straight-on shot, that's cool too—whatever you think. He's in street clothes, a wilderness outfit.

I also love the idea of it being sunrise, just because that sets up such a lovely metaphor. This is almost like it's the beginning of Logan's last day on Earth. Plus, it gives us a killer color palette to work with.

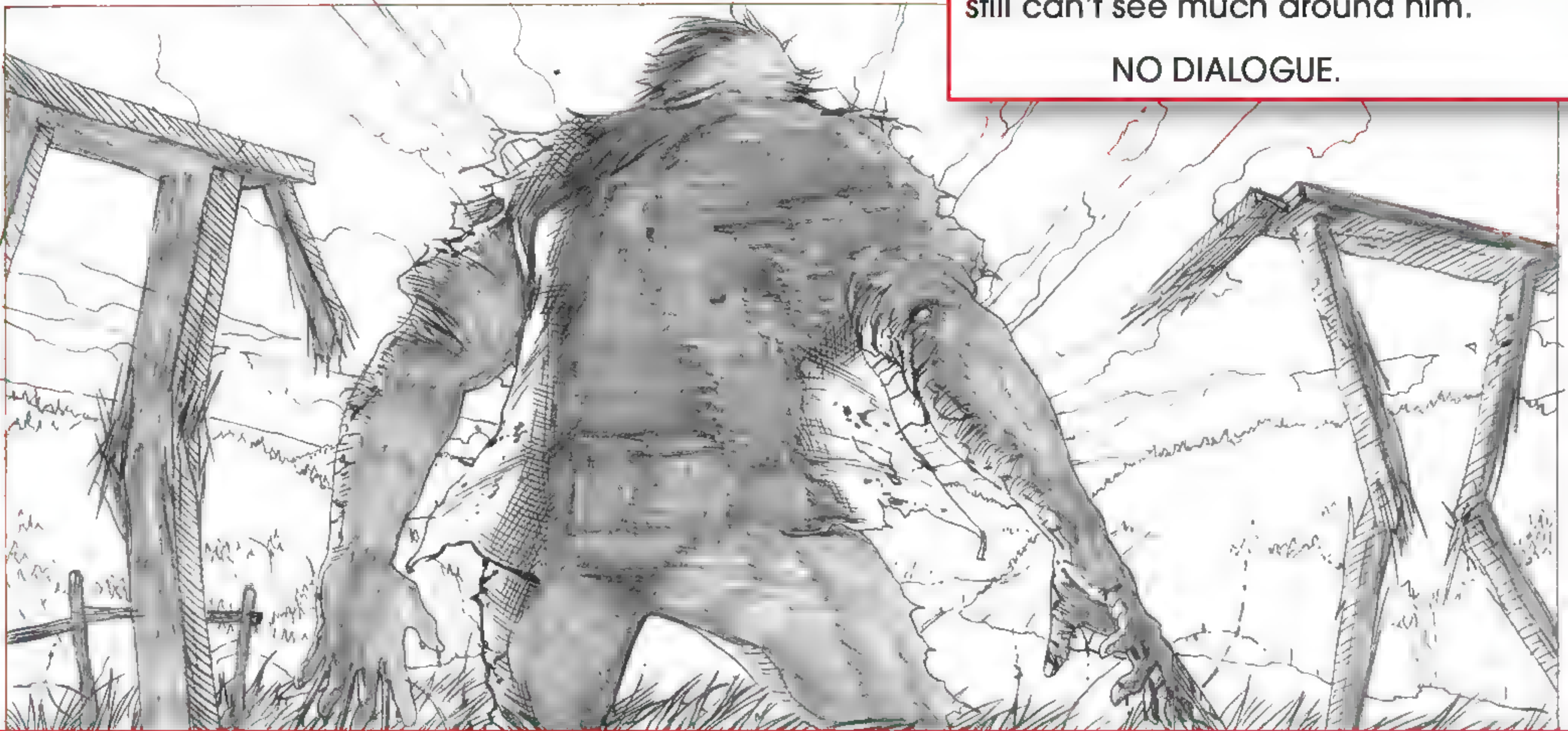
You want to be a little careful with this shot, because it's part of a reveal of a wider scene that we don't fully see until pages 4-5. You'll see if you move on to the next few pages.

1. CAPTION (location): BRITISH COLUMBIA.
2. CAPTION (time): NOW.
3. SENSE CAPTION (smell): GUNSMOKE
4. SENSE CAPTION (smell): BLOOD
5. SENSE CAPTION (sound): SILENCE
6. SENSE CAPTION (pain): HANDS

PAGE TWO

Panel 1: Wolverine is standing up from the porch. We've gone a bit wider here, but we still can't see much around him.

NO DIALOGUE.



Panel 2: Wolverine is walking down the mountain path, away from the cabin. We're going wider, but we still can't see everything around him. However, we can see puddles and spatters of blood on the path, maybe even a severed limb holding a gun, that sort of thing. This is part of a slow reveal that will pay off on the next page—we're getting the sense that Logan was just involved in something pretty violent.

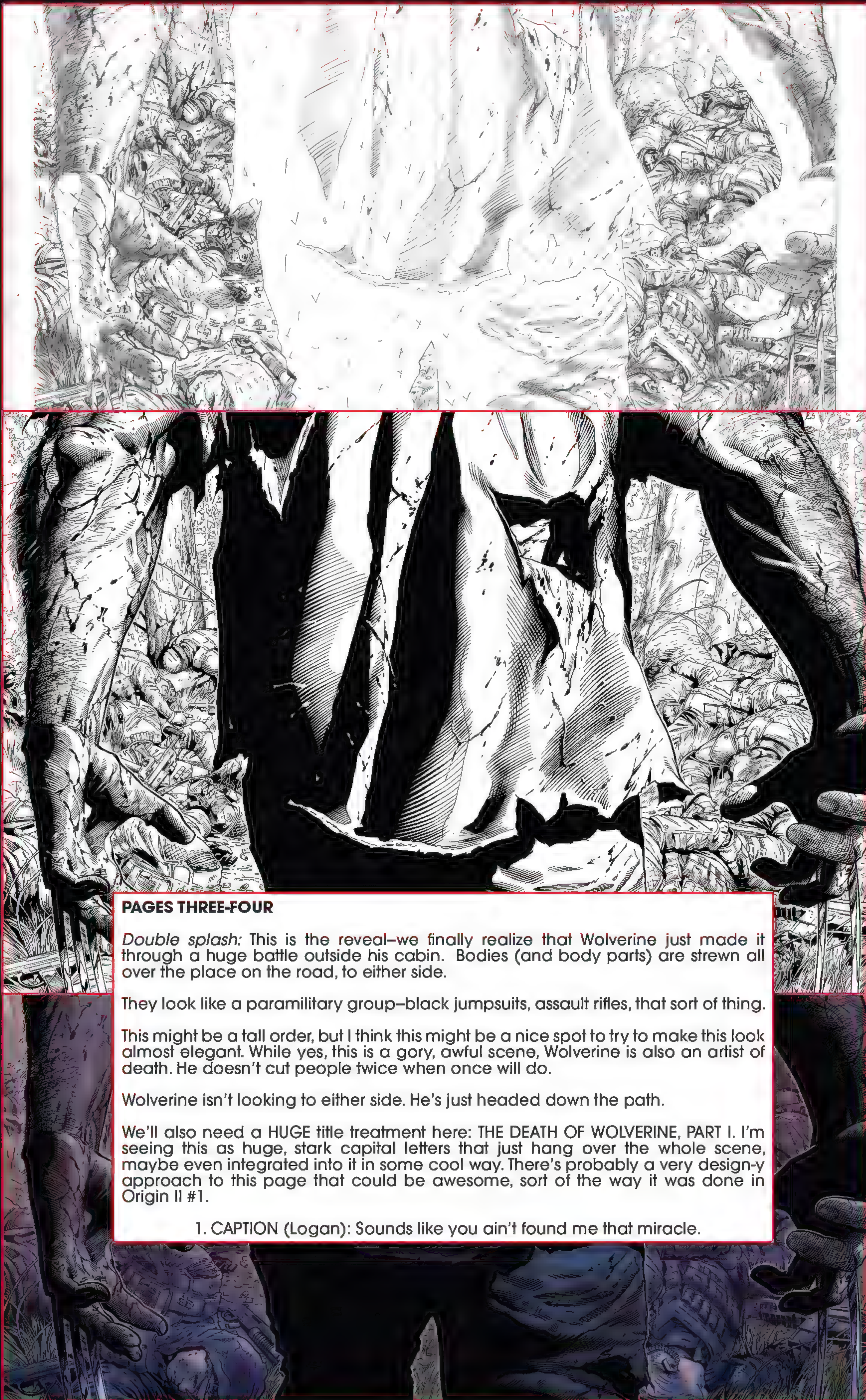
Note—his claws are still out here. Blood is dripping off them, much of it Logan's.

NO DIALOGUE.



Panel 3: Logan's further down the path, and we've gone even wider, building to the reveal on the next page.

NO DIALOGUE.



PAGES THREE-FOUR

Double splash: This is the reveal—we finally realize that Wolverine just made it through a huge battle outside his cabin. Bodies (and body parts) are strewn all over the place on the road, to either side.

They look like a paramilitary group—black jumpsuits, assault rifles, that sort of thing.

This might be a tall order, but I think this might be a nice spot to try to make this look almost elegant. While yes, this is a gory, awful scene, Wolverine is also an artist of death. He doesn't cut people twice when once will do.

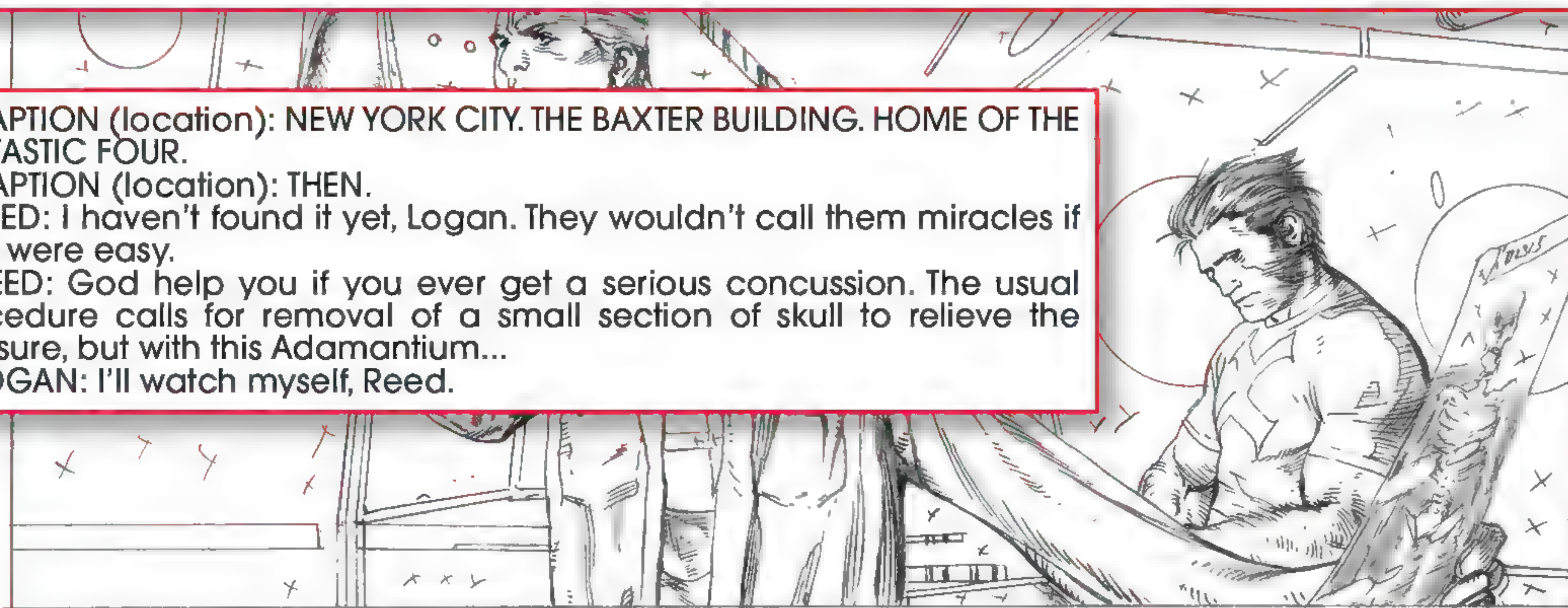
Wolverine isn't looking to either side. He's just headed down the path.

We'll also need a HUGE title treatment here: THE DEATH OF WOLVERINE, PART I. I'm seeing this as huge, stark capital letters that just hang over the whole scene, maybe even integrated into it in some cool way. There's probably a very design-y approach to this page that could be awesome, sort of the way it was done in Origin II #1.

1. CAPTION (Logan): Sounds like you ain't found me that miracle.

Panel 1: We have changed location—we are now in a lab in the Baxter Building in New York City. Reed Richards, Mr. Fantastic, is holding up an X-Ray of Logan's head to a light source. Both his arm and his neck are stretching a bit, so he can get the X-Ray closer to the light, and his eyes closer to the X-Ray. Behind him, Wolverine is leaning against a piece of gear—a lab table or something like that. He's not in any sort of costume - it's street-level clothing. Reed seems concerned—whatever the X-ray is showing him, he doesn't like it.

1. CAPTION (location): NEW YORK CITY. THE BAXTER BUILDING. HOME OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
2. CAPTION (location): THEN.
3. REED: I haven't found it yet, Logan. They wouldn't call them miracles if they were easy.
4. REED: God help you if you ever get a serious concussion. The usual procedure calls for removal of a small section of skull to relieve the pressure, but with this Adamantium...
5. LOGAN: I'll watch myself, Reed.



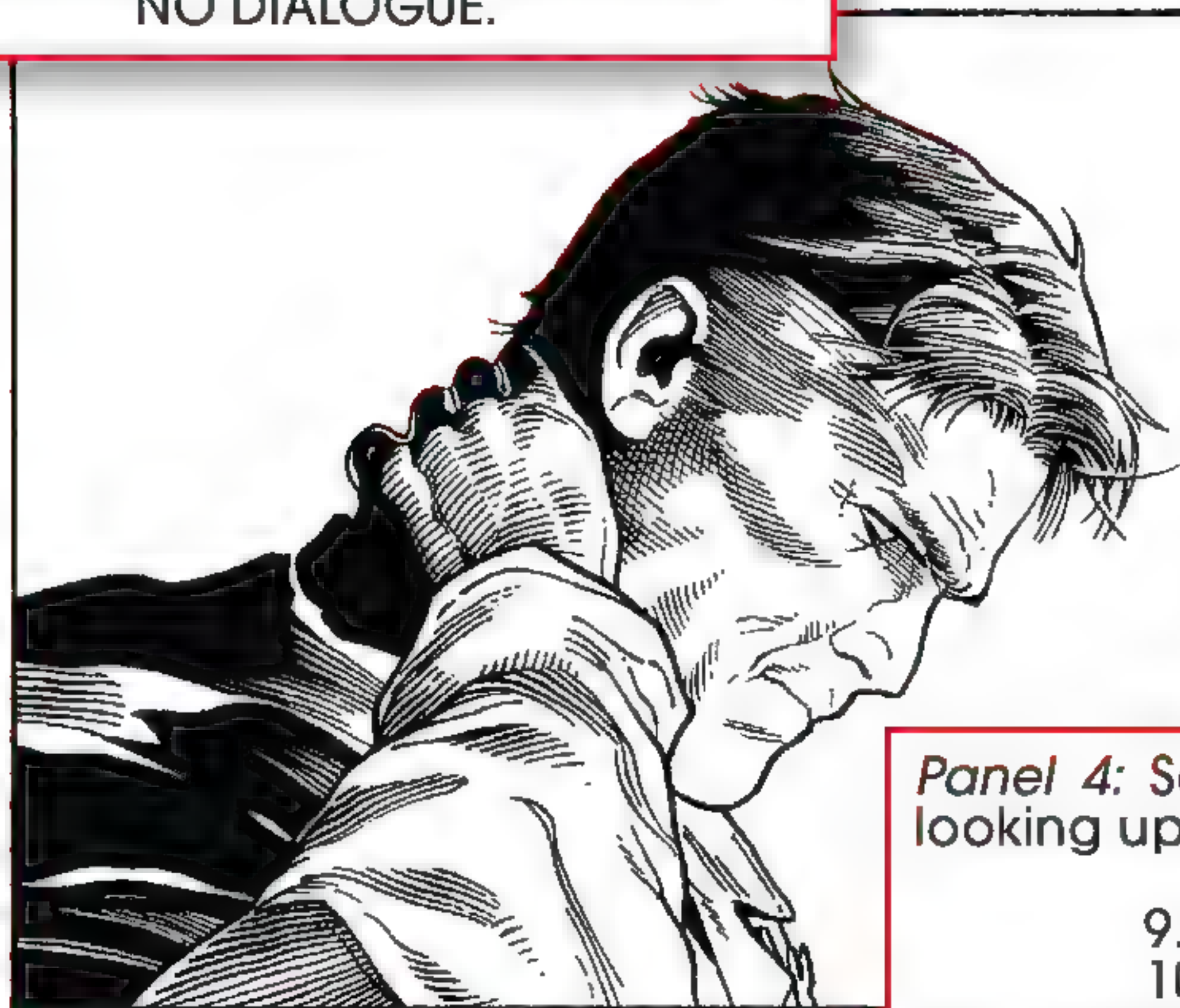
Panel 2: Logan's holding out a hand in front of him, looking down at it as if it hurts him a bit.

6. LOGAN: So lay it out for me.



Panel 3: Reed, in profile, looking down. He seems bummed, defeated.

NO DIALOGUE.

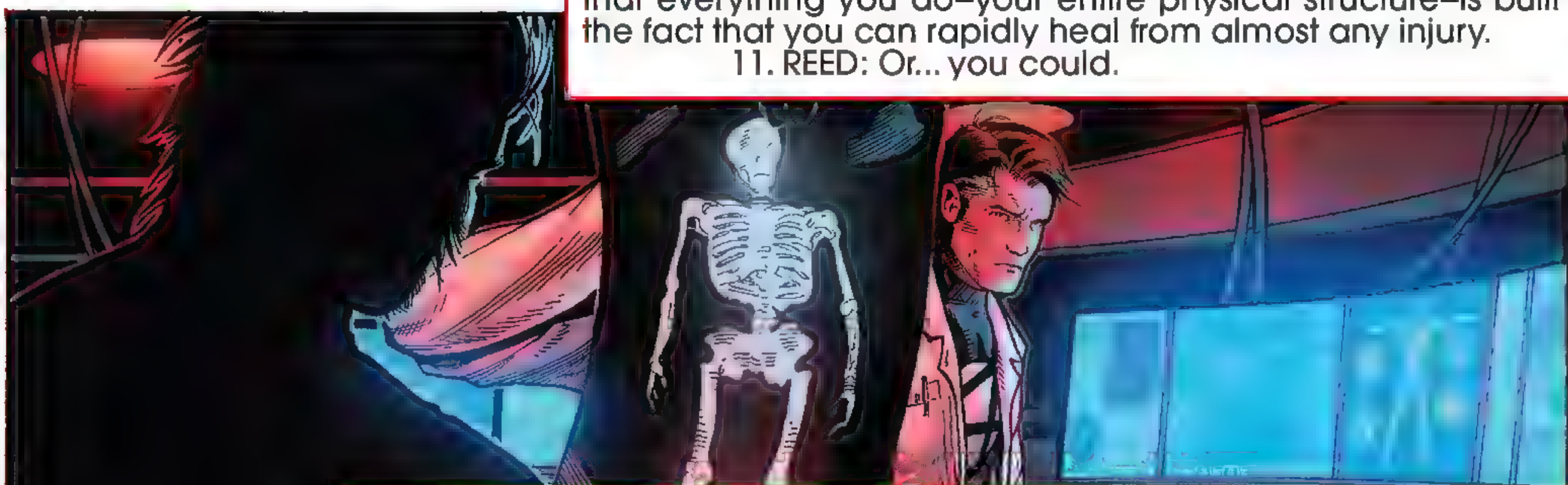


Panel 4: Same shot, except Reed has turned to face Logan. He's looking up, straight at him.

9. REED: All right. Listen.

10. REED: You have lost your healing factor. The problem is that everything you do—your entire physical structure—is built around the fact that you can rapidly heal from almost any injury.

11. REED: Or... you could.



Panel 5: Reed has picked up an X-Ray of Wolvie's entire body and is showing it to him—I think this is a good opportunity to showcase Reed's stretchy powers again—he's stretching his arm across the room a bit to show the X-ray to Wolverine. Logan's metal skeleton is clearly visible in white.

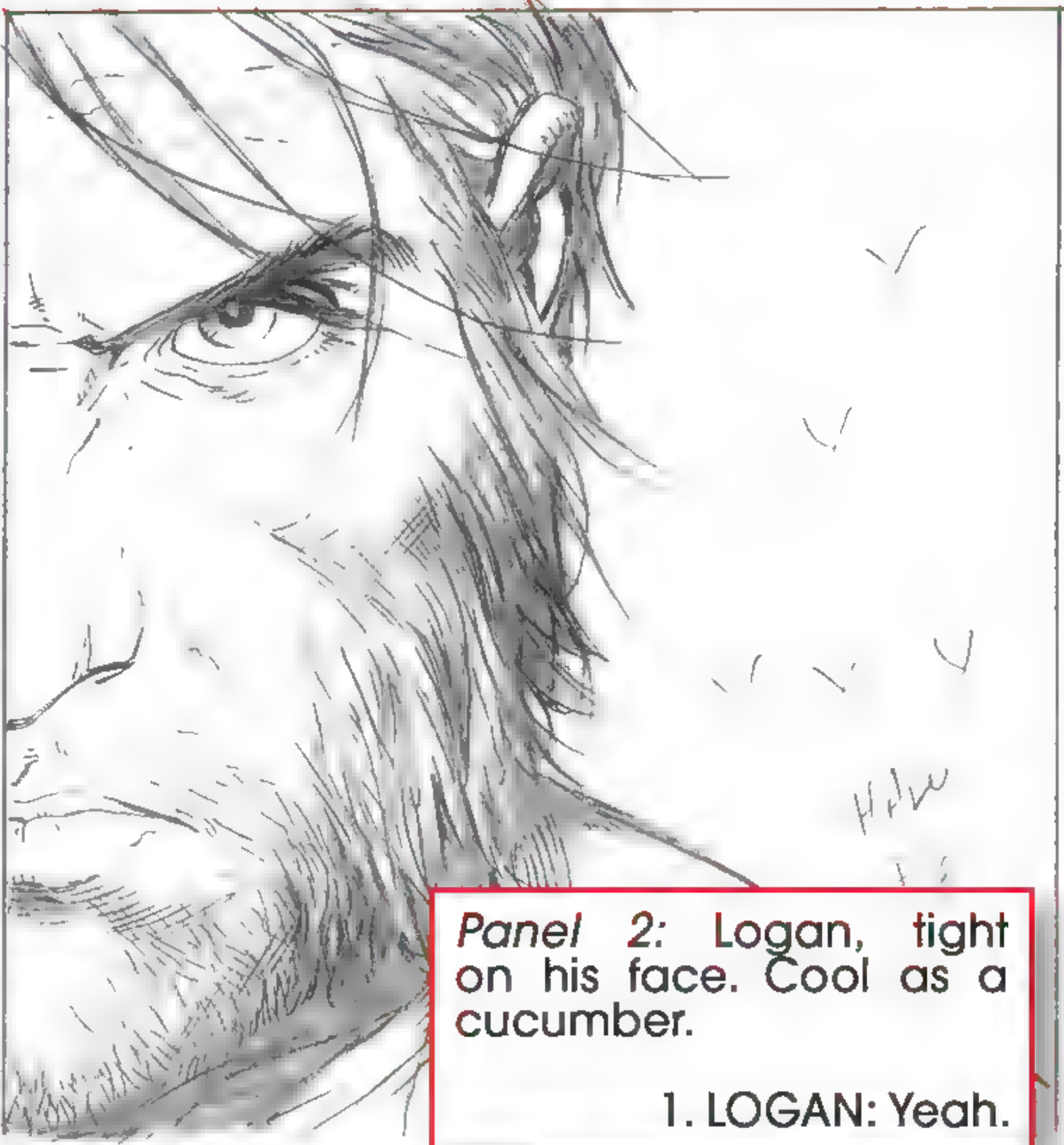
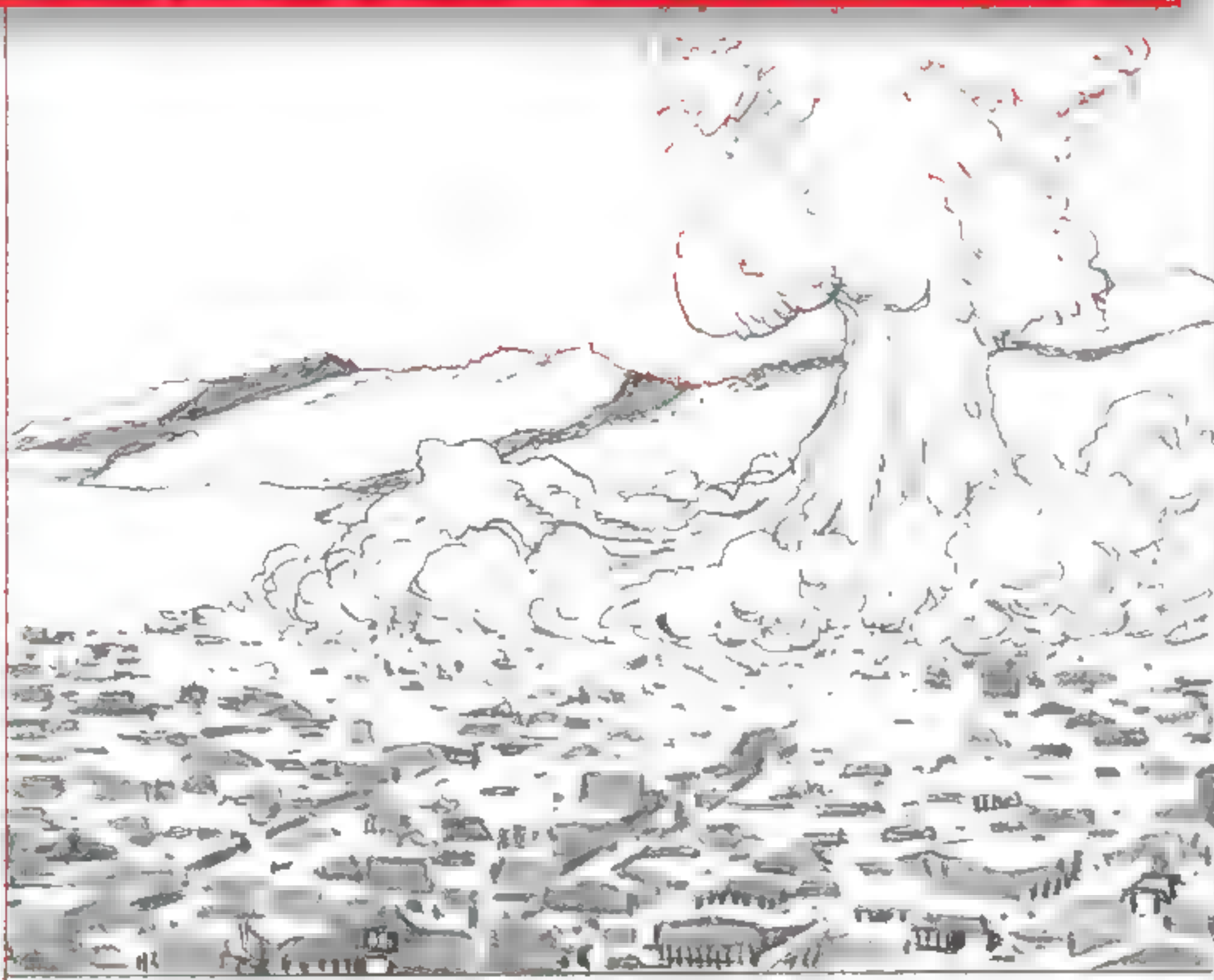
12. REED: You still have your strength, your speed. That's good—otherwise you wouldn't be able to move with this much metal inside you.

13. REED: But that's the only good news.

14. REED: Your bones are mildly radioactive from various exposures over the decades. Didn't you tell me once you were present at Nagasaki?

Panel 1: Panel of Logan being incinerated—the idea is that he’s remembering back to Nagasaki, when he survived the blast in World War II. If you want to make this more of a wide shot, with the mushroom cloud, the harbor, etc., I’d be totally into that. This is our one chance to refer to Logan’s WW2 history, so I’d love to make it cool.

NO DIALOGUE.

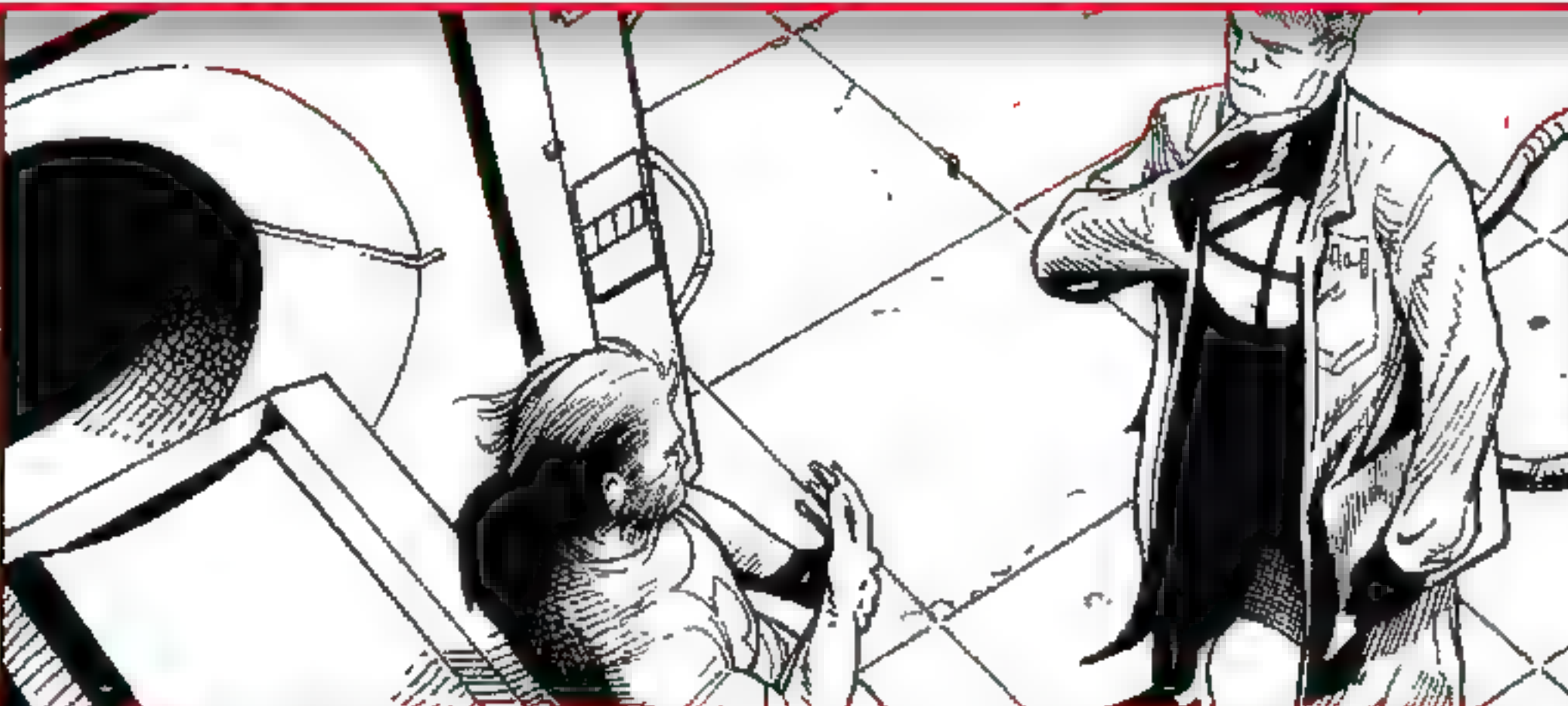


Panel 2: Logan, tight on his face. Cool as a cucumber.

1. LOGAN: Yeah.

Panel 3: Back to a wider shot.

2. REED: Yes, well. The upshot is that you’re a prime candidate for heavy-metal related leukemia.
3. REED: That’s assuming you don’t get endocarditis from all the bacteria you keep pulling into yourself every time you use your claws.



4. REED: I can solve this for you in time. I can speak with Stark, and Hank McCoy—we can—
5. LOGAN: Already seen ‘em. You’re the last genius on my list, Reed. No offense.



Panel 4: Reed.

6. REED: None taken. We’ve never been close.
7. REED: But that doesn’t mean I want to see you die. You’re important, Logan. The things you’ve accomplished in your life... the world needs you.
8. REED: I can reactivate your healing factor. I know I can. But I need time. You have to stop fighting. Stay out of things for a while. Find a place to hole up.



Panel 5: Logan.

9. LOGAN: Yeah, see, that’s the problem. Word’s gonna get out that I’m vulnerable. Don’t know how, don’t know who, but it will. That’s the way it works.
10. LOGAN: And then they’ll come hunting. Open season.



Panel 6: Same basic shot as panel 5, but we’ve zoomed in somewhat so that we’re closer on Logan’s hands.

11. REED: There’s nothing you can do about that. All you can do is put it off as long as you can.
12. REED: But for God’s sake, Logan, please...

PAGE SEVEN

Panel 1: Large, close-up panel of the backs of Wolverine's hands, which look horribly lacerated, bruised, etc. They look, in other words, how a person's hands might look if six incredibly sharp knives were shoved through them. The claws are still out. The idea here, hopefully, is that it will feel something like a continuation of the last panel on page 5, like a jump cut from his uninjured hands to his wrecked ones.

We're back in British Columbia, in the scene we last saw on page 1.

1. CAPTION (Reed): ...do not use your claws.



Panel 2: Wolverine is retracting his claws. Blood is spraying out - it seems painful, gory, and gross.

SFX: SHKK

1. SENSE CAPTION (Pain): HANDS (let's make this bigger and more intense than the one on page one—the idea should be to convey that this hurts like hell.)

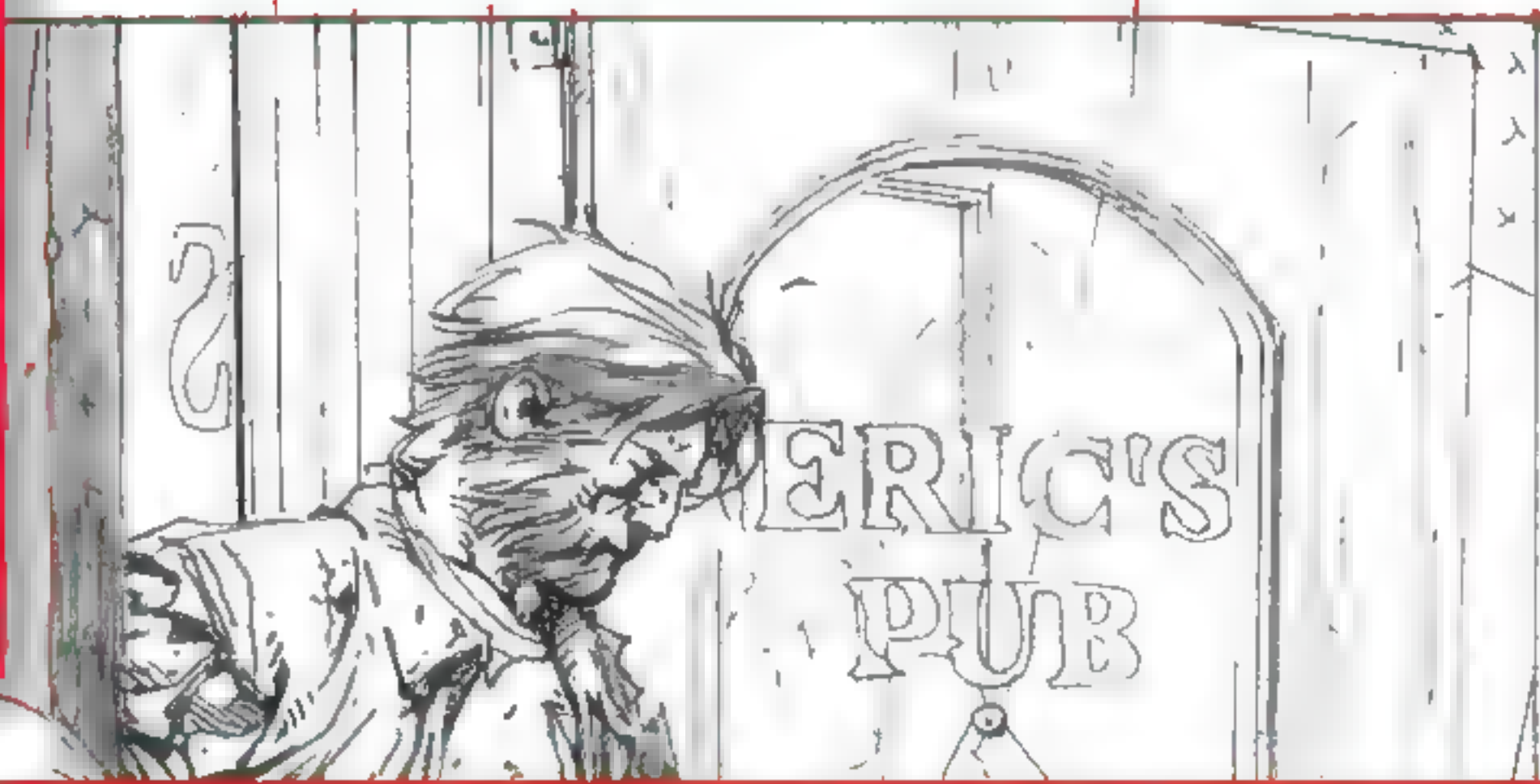
Panel 3: Tight on Wolverine's face, or even just his jaw—his mouth has tightened, and his face is clenched—we want to suggest that this hurt him. He's vulnerable. We'll hit that note again and again.

NO DIALOGUE.

Panel 1: Wolverine has entered a small fishing town on the coast. Not much to it, just a main street, a few side streets, very small. This is essentially an establishing shot—if you prefer, you can get this into the splash on page 7, by showing Logan from behind looking down towards this town.

Logan is entering a bar on the main street, just a total dive, pretty much home base for a guy like Logan. He should have rags wrapped around his hands—ripped-off pieces of shirt, just temporary bandages.

NO DIALOGUE.



Panel 2: We're now just inside, looking at the bar from Logan's POV. This is a FLASHBACK to let's say 80 years before. The bar should look appropriate for the 1930s, and should be colored differently than present-day stuff. (Sepia-toned? Greyscale? Sort of misty?) A few scattered drinkers are sitting at the bar, but not too many. Again, all dressed in 1930s-appropriate wear. The bartender, a stout-but-strong fellow with grey muttonchops, is polishing a glass and calling out to Logan.

1. BARTENDER: Hey, Logan. Been—



Panel 3: The same exact shot as panel 2, but now it is present day—the flashback is over. The bartender is in the same place, doing the same thing, but he looks younger—this is the original bartender's great-grandson. I'd still include some drinkers, but put them in different spots.

A television is mounted above the bar, where a talking head news broadcast is playing. The little inset on the TV screen next to the guy's head has a photo (headshot) of a handsome, blonde young man (20s) on it.

1. SENSE CAPTION (smell): BAR

2. BARTENDER: —a little while since you've been in. You want one?

3. LOGAN: Sure. Actually, give me the whole bottle, no glass, and a couple clean bar rags, if you got 'em. And your phone. That all right?

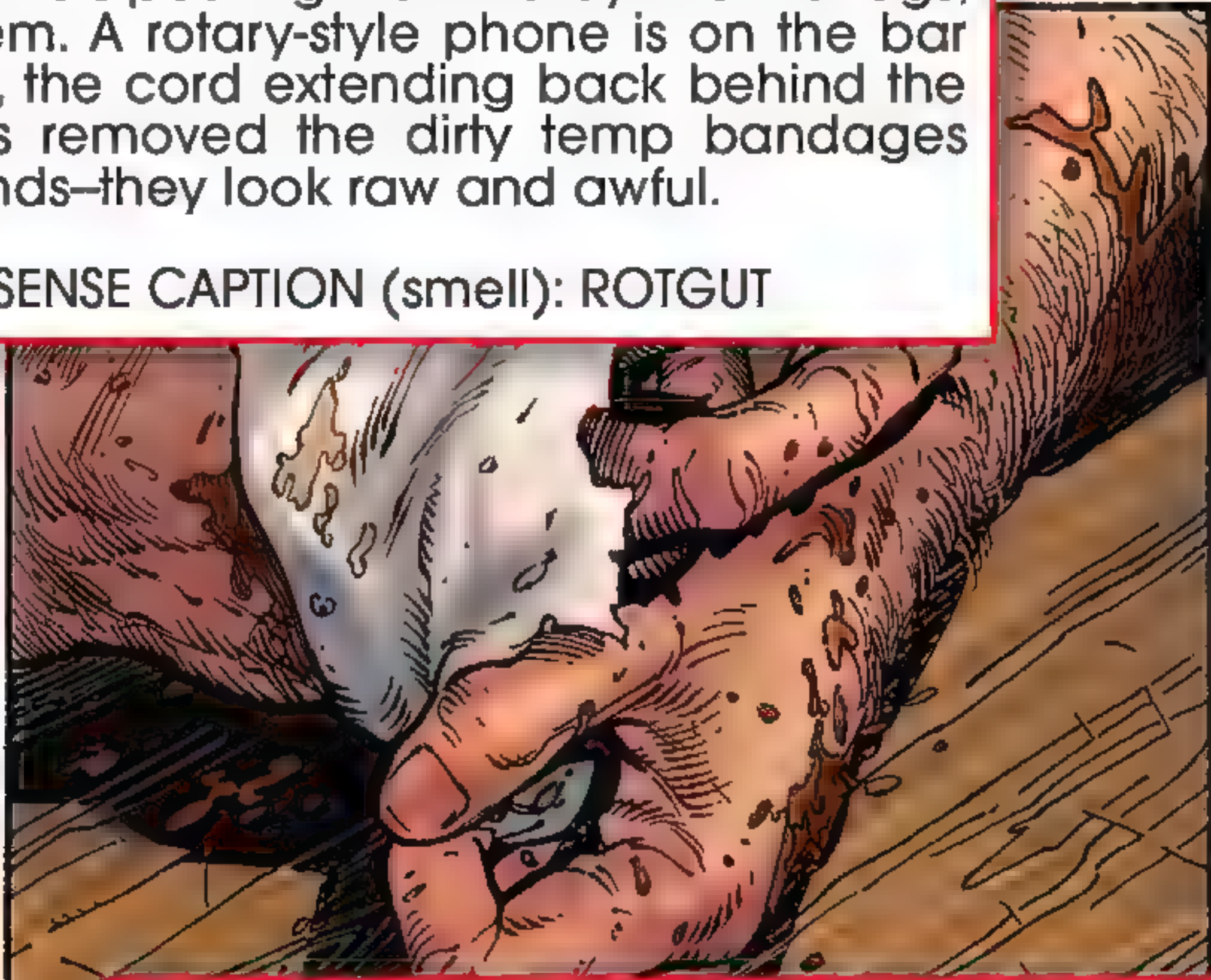
4. BARTENDER: Sounds like a solid afternoon. Comin' up.

5. TV (radio balloon): —the missing plane containing the French Olympians is just the latest in a string of disappearances of high-profile athletes. At this point—



Panel 4: Logan is seated at the bar. He's got the bottle of whiskey in one hand, and some bar rags in the other. He's pouring the whiskey into the rags, soaking them. A rotary-style phone is on the bar next to him, the cord extending back behind the bar. He has removed the dirty temp bandages from his hands—they look raw and awful.

6. SENSE CAPTION (smell): ROTGUT

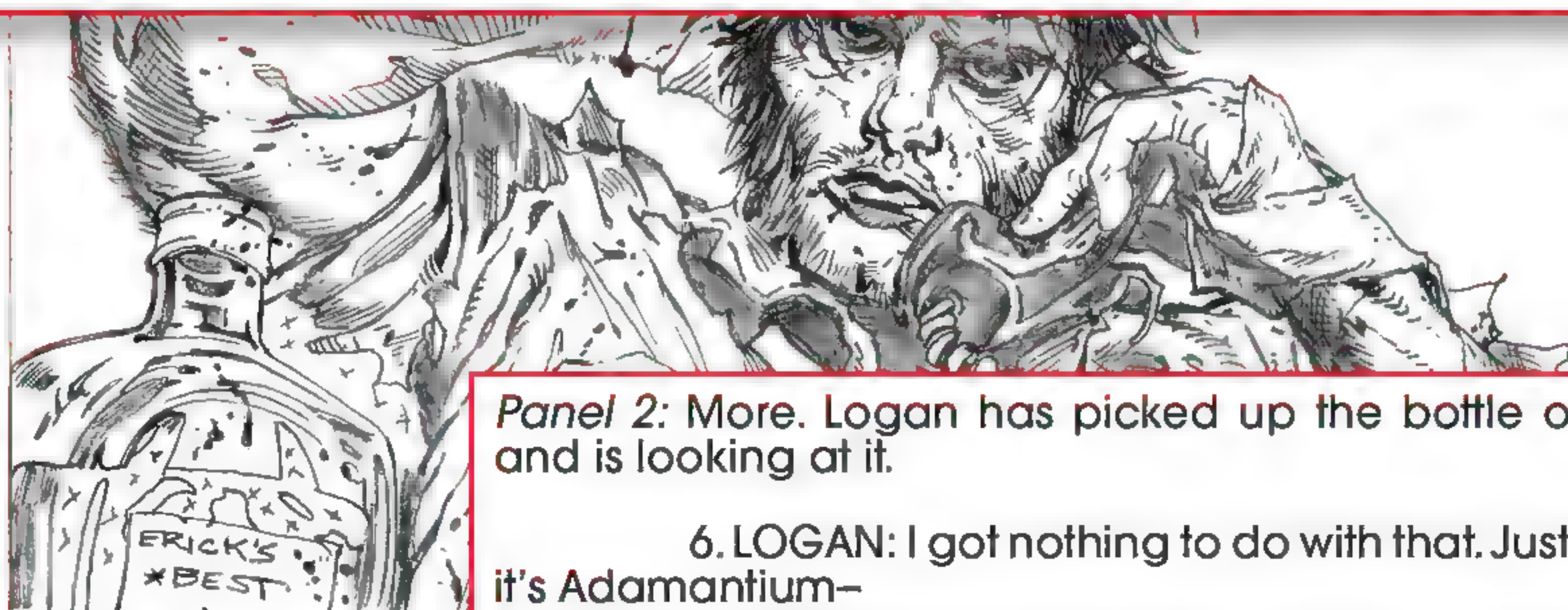


Panel 5: Logan is wrapping the bandages around his hands. He's wincing, gritting his teeth a little - even for Logan, this hurts. You could do this as a tight shot of his hands if you prefer—whatever you think works.

7. SENSE CAPTION (pain): HANDS

Panel 1: Logan is now talking on the phone. His hands are now "bandaged," more or less. As a subtle thing, let's have them be in the shape of an 'X' across the back of his hands.

1. PHONE (radio bubble): Logan! My god. I was just thinking about you.
2. LOGAN: Yeah?
3. PHONE: Yeah. You know Battlestar?
4. LOGAN: Battlest- Cap's guy?
5. PHONE: Yeah. His shield was stolen, I guess. It's made of Adamantium. Made me think of you.



Panel 2: More. Logan has picked up the bottle of whiskey and is looking at it.

6. LOGAN: I got nothing to do with that. Just because it's Adamantium-
7. PHONE: I know that. You know, Logan, it's okay for people to think about you. It's okay for people to care about you.
8. PHONE: I'm glad you called. No one's heard from you in ages. Are you all right? Where are you?
9. LOGAN: I'm good. Just needed to hear a friendly voice.
10. LOGAN: ...



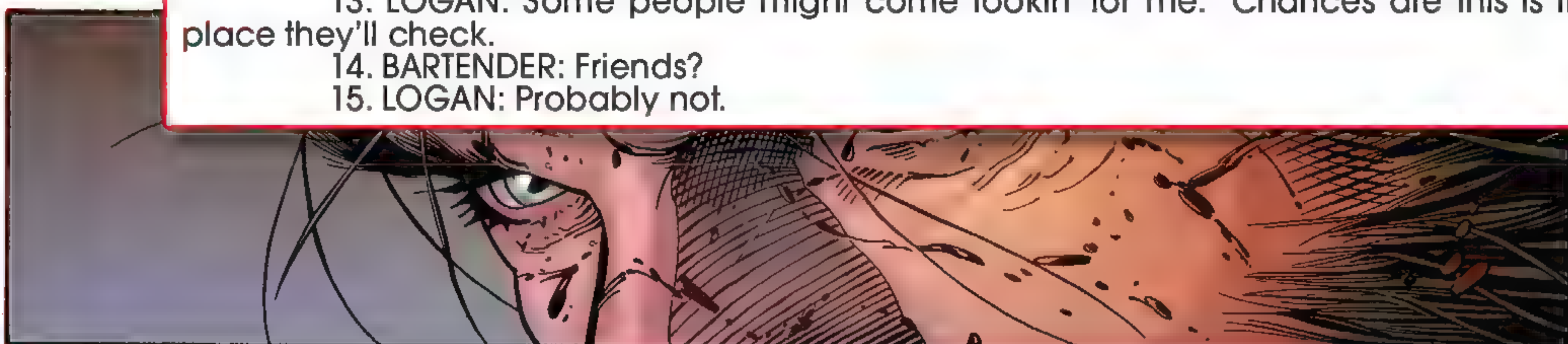
Panel 3: Tight on Logan's bandaged hand hanging up the phone.

10. PHONE: Well, sure... but-
- SFX: <klik>



Panel 4: Logan's calling down the bar to the bartender.

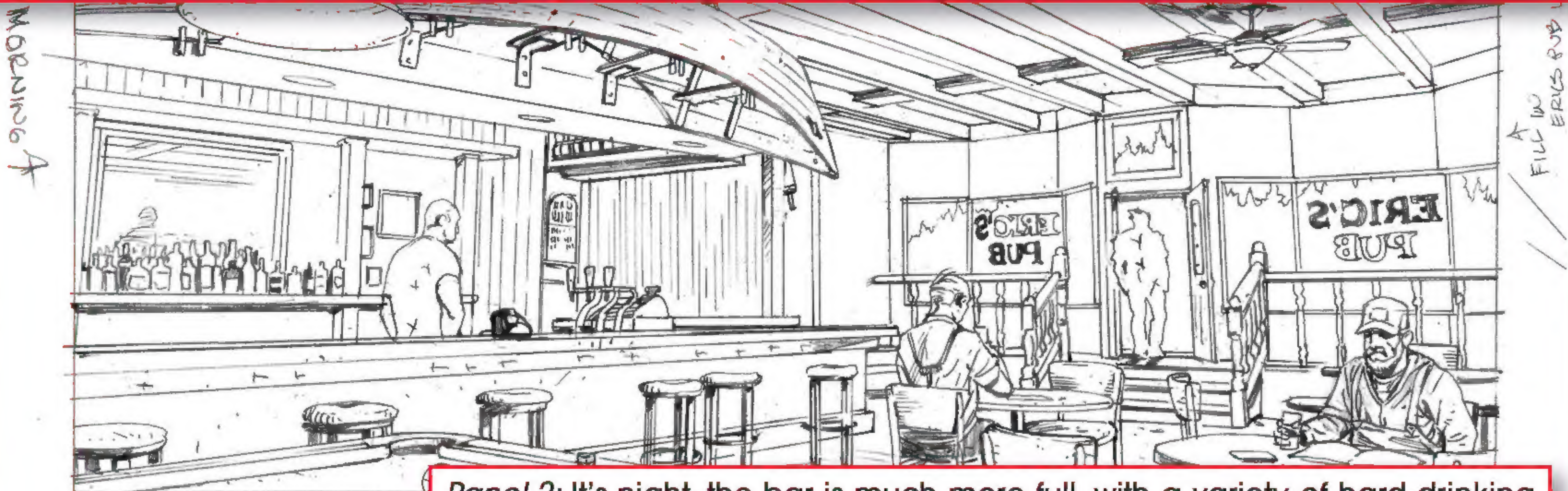
11. LOGAN: Hey, pal. Get me a glass after all. One for the road. And I got one more favor to ask, too.
12. BARTENDER: What's that?
13. LOGAN: Some people might come lookin' for me. Chances are this is the first place they'll check.
14. BARTENDER: Friends?
15. LOGAN: Probably not.



PAGE TEN (The point of this page is to suggest that some time is passing—it's all basically the same shot, but you can arrange as you like.)

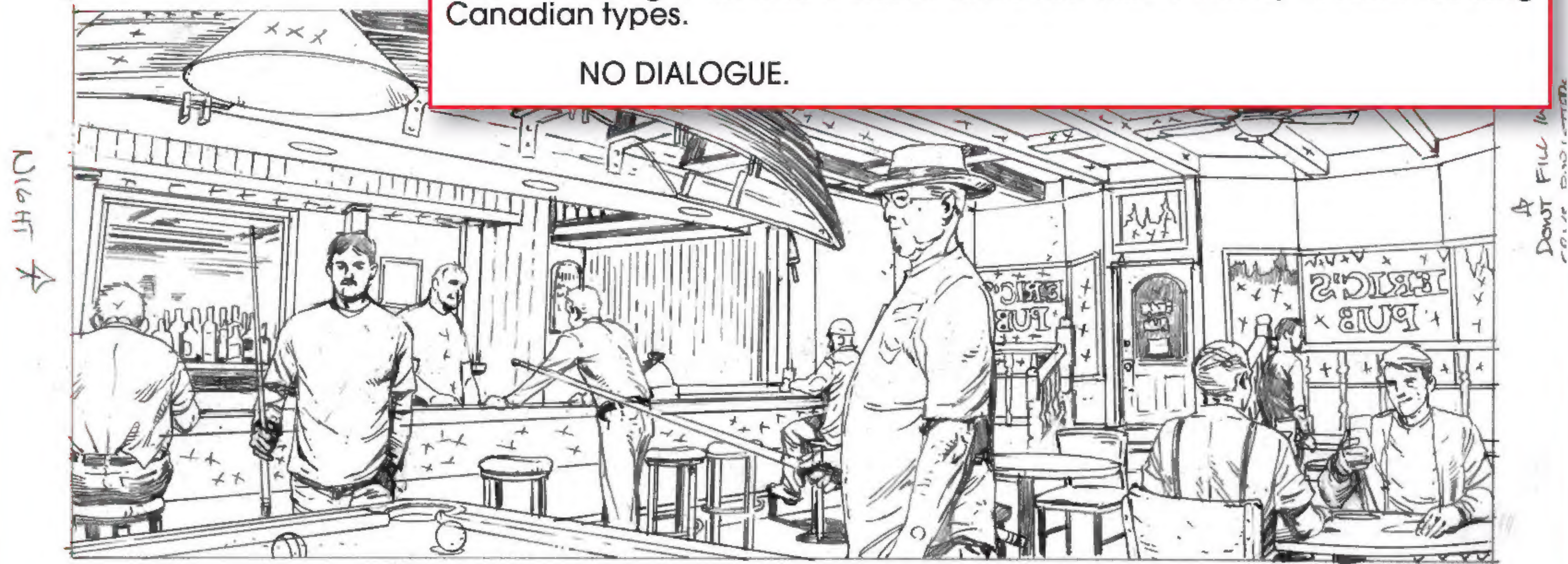
Panel 1: Shot looking down the bar past the bartender, towards the front door. Wolverine is leaving. Still day, visible through the window.

NO DIALOGUE.



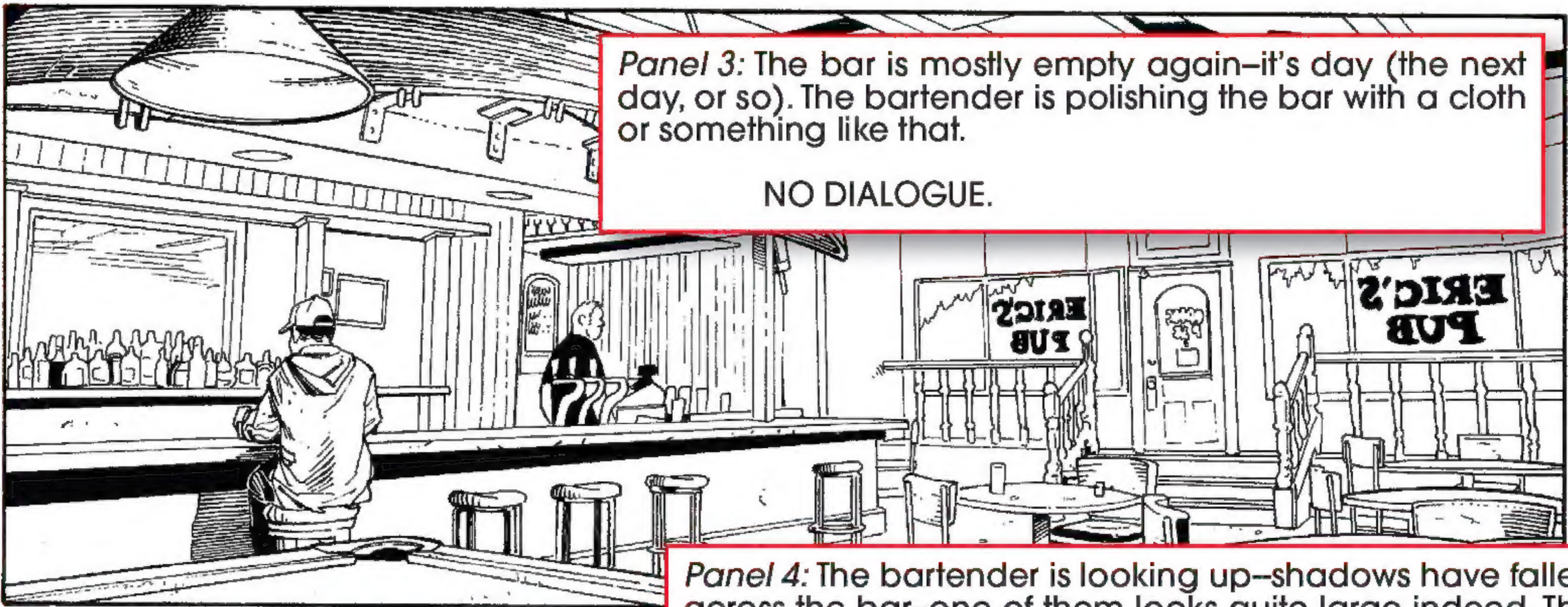
Panel 2: It's night—the bar is much more full, with a variety of hard-drinking Canadian types.

NO DIALOGUE.



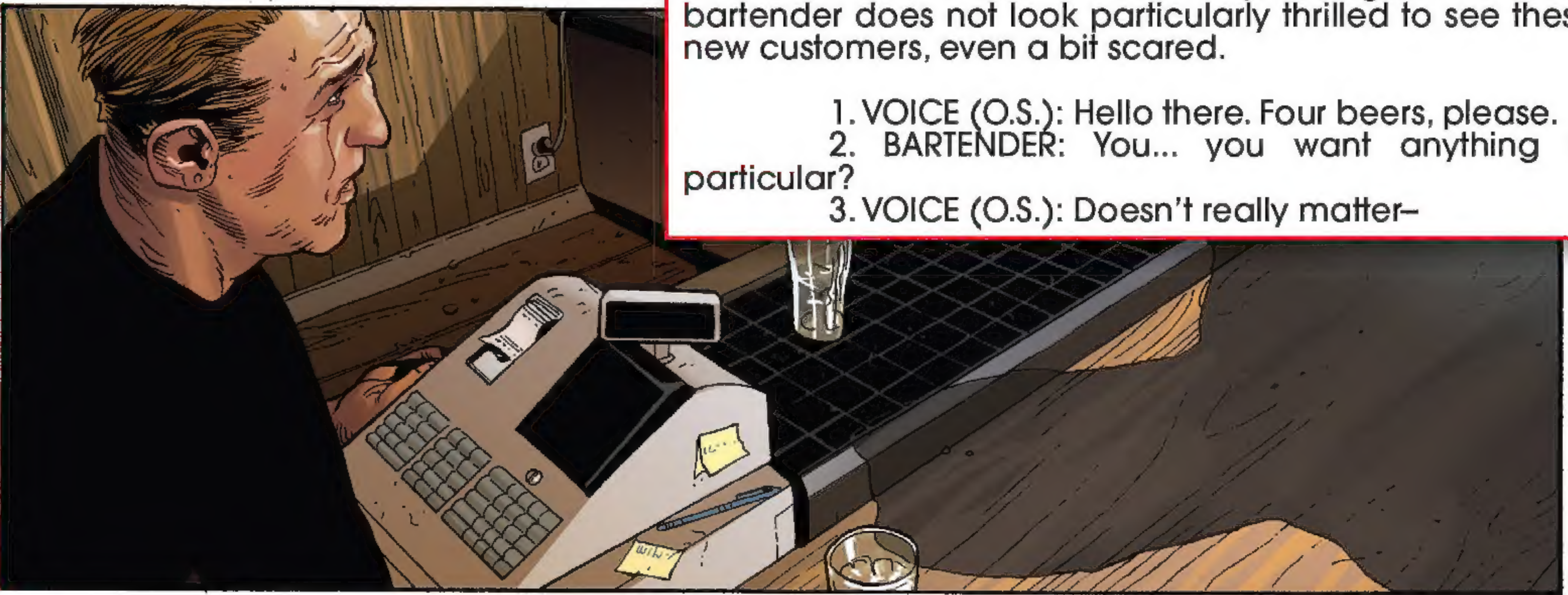
Panel 3: The bar is mostly empty again—it's day (the next day, or so). The bartender is polishing the bar with a cloth or something like that.

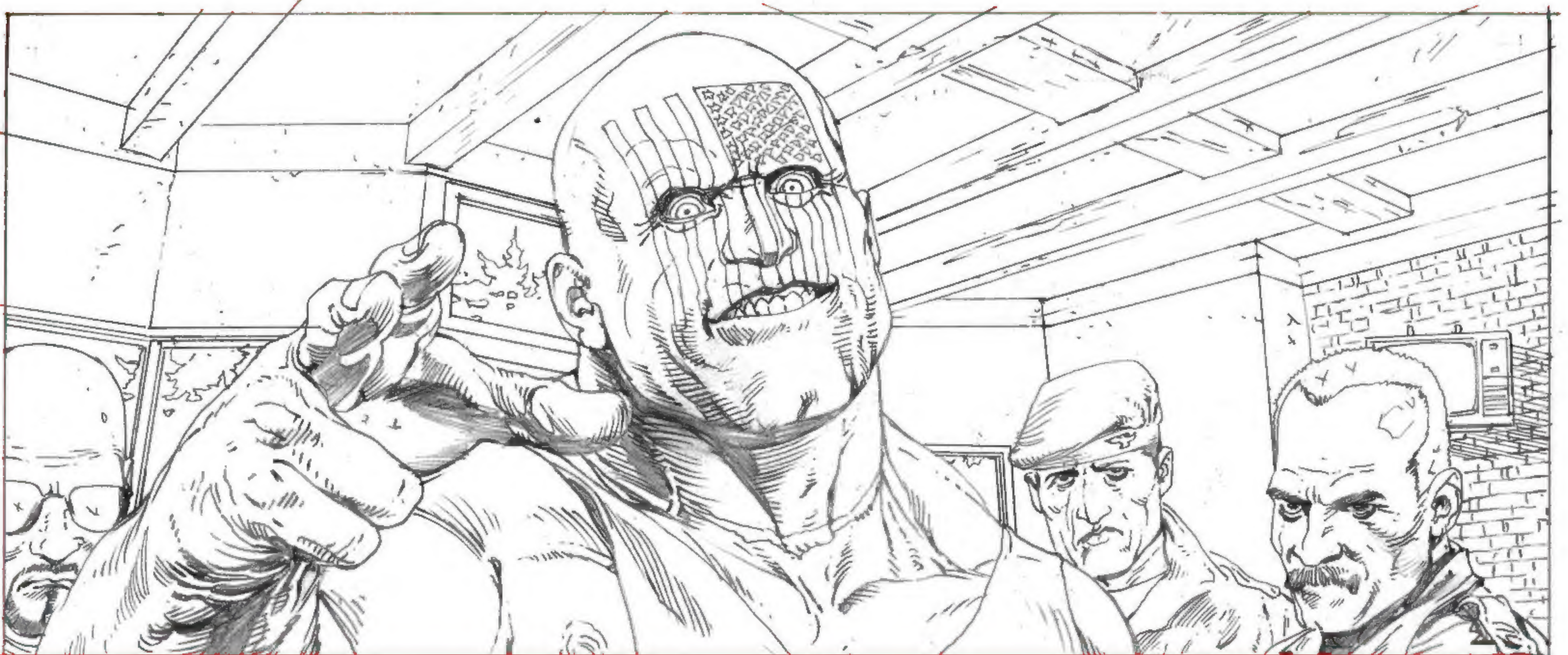
NO DIALOGUE.



Panel 4: The bartender is looking up—shadows have fallen across the bar—one of them looks quite large indeed. The bartender does not look particularly thrilled to see these new customers, even a bit scared.

- 1. VOICE (O.S.): Hello there. Four beers, please.
- 2. BARTENDER: You... you want anything in particular?
- 3. VOICE (O.S.): Doesn't really matter—





PAGE ELEVEN

Panel 1: Large panel—we see that the visitor is... NUKE! He's the crazy merc-type guy with the American flag tattooed on his face. He was in the classic Miller Daredevil stories, and he's appeared a number of places since then.

Here, he should look like he's a little past his prime, like a gone-to-seed wrestler who's been hitting the 'roids pretty damn hard to keep up his strength levels. You did such incredible work updating the designs of characters for Old Man Logan that I know you'll nail this. Nuke isn't quite as A-list as some of the dudes in that story, but he's definitely fun. Could even have a scar across his flag at this point—anything to suggest he's had some hard living since we last saw him.

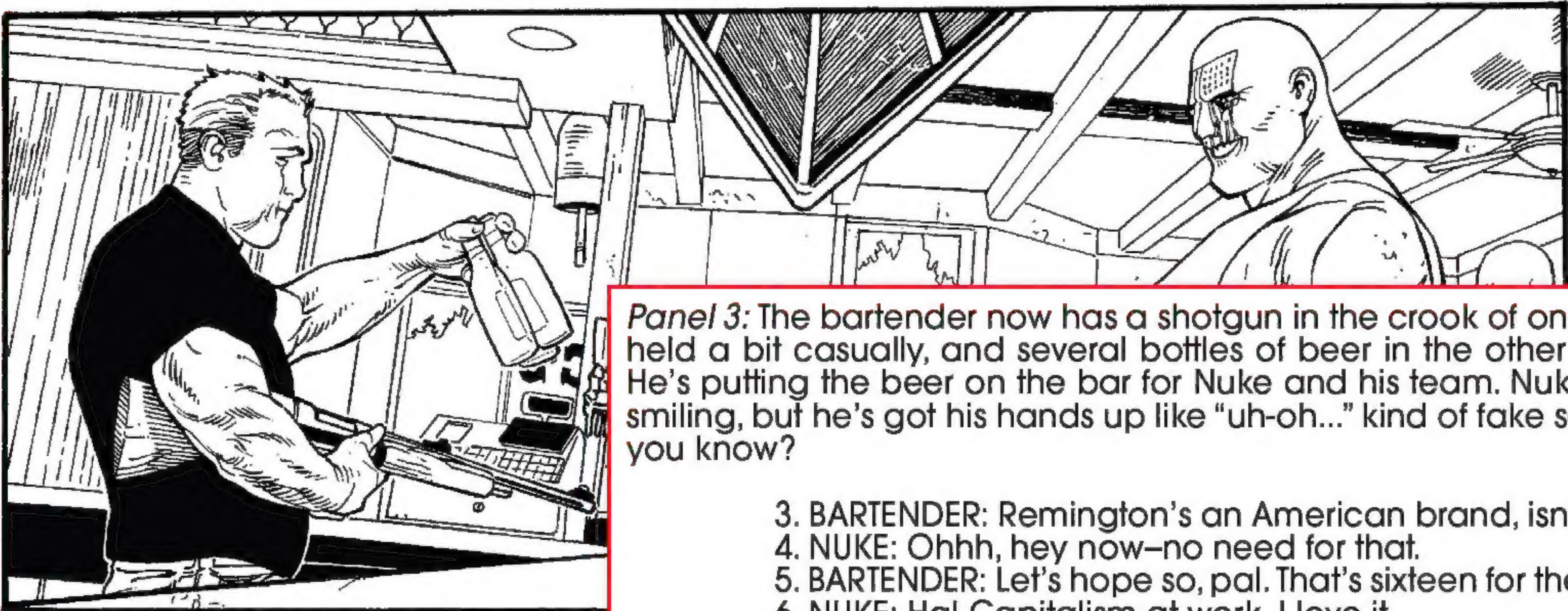
There are three other mercs with Nuke. They're much smaller—regular guys, but scary looking.

Nuke is smiling—he's all good-humor and bonhomie.

1. NUKE: --as long as it's American.

Panel 2: The bartender is reaching below the bar with both hands. Could just be tight on his arms reaching below the bar, to save some space on the page.

2. BARTENDER: Pretty sure I got something down here.



Panel 3: The bartender now has a shotgun in the crook of one arm, held a bit casually, and several bottles of beer in the other hand. He's putting the beer on the bar for Nuke and his team. Nuke's still smiling, but he's got his hands up like "uh-oh..." kind of fake scared, you know?

3. BARTENDER: Remington's an American brand, isn't it?
 4. NUKE: Ohhh, hey now—no need for that.
 5. BARTENDER: Let's hope so, pal. That's sixteen for the beer.
 6. NUKE: Ha! Capitalism at work. I love it.



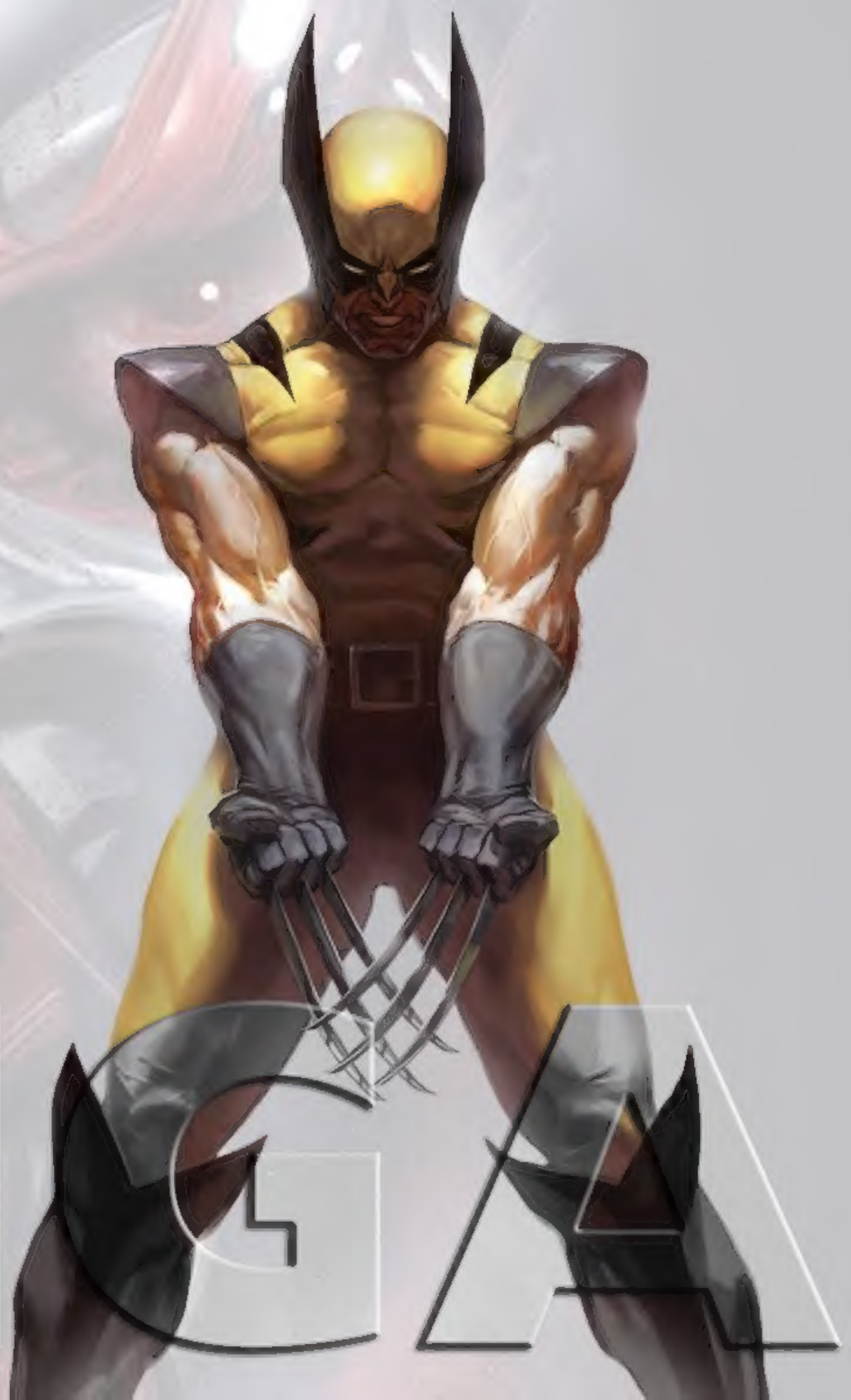
Panel 4: Tight panel. Nuke's hand has come in from off-panel and is putting \$200 on the bar, which needs to be American currency.

7. NUKE (O.S.): There. Good old USA moolah, from Nuke to you.
 8. BARTENDER (O.S.): I said sixteen. What's the rest for?

COMING SOON DEATH OF WOLVERINE #2



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NATHAN